

Workshop on Experimental Methods Within Surveys

Economics and Planning Unit, Indian Statistical Institute, Delhi Centre

21 – 24 November 2016

Diane Coffey

Dean Spears

Classes will meet in the afternoon. Each class is 2 hours with a 10 minute break. All participants agree to bring a (very rough, incomplete, simple, potentially bad) idea for a research project of this type for group discussion on the last day of the course.

Monday 21 November: Introduction

- Why survey experiments?: Credibility, cost, and freedom to persuasively answer the question you care about [Dean 30 minutes]
- Basics of survey econometrics: Survey Design, Weights, Design Effects [Diane 65 minutes]
 - see: <http://riceinstitute.org/research/demographic-data-collection-syllabus/>
- Discussion question, based on Deaton: How important is the sampling frame to randomized survey experiments? [Everyone: 15 minutes]
 - Deaton, Angus, and Nancy Cartwright. 2016. "Understanding and Misunderstanding Randomized Controlled Trials." NBER Working Paper, no. 22595.

Tuesday 22 November: Application to Social Attitudes, and software tools

- Introduction and principles [Diane 30 minutes]
- Application to horizontal inequality [Diane 30 minutes]
 - Resume experiments; Devah Pager
- Further applications to caste [Dean 20 minutes]
 - Deshpande and Spears
 - Singh and Spears
- Introduction to Qualtrics and survey monkey software [Both: 30 minutes]

Wednesday 23 November: Applications to the Social Choice Literature, and software tools

- Empirical social choice (Gaertner and Schokkaert): principles and classics [Dean 60 minutes]
- Empirical social choice: recent papers: [Dean 20 minutes]
- Introduction to mTurk software: [Dean 30 minutes]
 - Papers about how mTurk replicates behavioral economics experiments

Thursday 24 November: What makes a good study? Learning from in the literature, and brainstorming together

- Interestingness, inversions, and "the drama in the dependent variable": [Dean 10 minutes]
 - Fiske, S.T., 2004. Developing a Program of Research. If we can find an electronic version.

- Kuziemko, et al *AER* (2015): [Dean 40 min]
- Karlan and Wood (2015): [Dean: 20 min] – not exactly survey-only, but paper based and accessible
- Group discussion of student-proposed ideas for survey experiments: [All: 40 min]

Reading list:

- Deshpande, A. and Spears, D., 2016. Who Is the Identifiable Victim? Caste and Charitable Giving in Modern India. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 64(2), pp.299-321.
- Gaertner, W. and Schokkaert, E., 2012. Empirical social choice: questionnaire-experimental studies on distributive justice. Cambridge University Press. [PDF available online]
- Kuziemko, Ilyana, et al. "How Elastic are Preferences for Redistribution? Evidence from Randomized Survey Experiments". *American Economic Review* 105.4 (2015): , 105, 4, 1478-1508.
- Paolacci, G., Chandler, J. and Ipeirotis, P.G., 2010. Running experiments on amazon mechanical turk. *Judgment and Decision making*, 5(5), pp.411-419.
- Karlan, D. and Wood, D.H., 2015. The effect of effectiveness: Donor response to aid effectiveness in a direct mail fundraising experiment.
- <http://riceinstitute.org/research/demographic-data-collection-syllabus/>

In general, many impactful social psychology experiments display drama in the dependent variable and subtlety in the independent variable. Small changes in the situation (such as an experimenter merely saying "the experiment requires that you continue") cause dramatic changes in the participants' behavior (e.g., shocking someone else to death; Milgram, 1965). This advice, credited to Stanley Schachter (L. Ross & Nisbett, 1991), fits other famous studies' seemingly trivial independent variables (\$1 versus \$20 payment, many or few bystanders, having retirees water their own houseplants or not) and dramatic dependent variables (liking a patently boring task, rescuing an accident victim, mortality rates).

← from Fiske