**API-202I - Spring 2018**

**Assignment #2**

**PART I – Case Study**

Read the paper: “Democratic Change in the Arab World, Past and Present”, by Eric Chaney. We have provided a “checklist” below that you may use to guide your reading.

We will discuss the paper in class on **Monday February 12th**. Students will present and discuss, whereas the professor will work as a moderator. We will provide PowerPoint slides with all the tables and figures from the paper. You do not need to produce any additional slides.

Since this exercise is part of the problem set, you are **required** to attend the class in order to get a grade on the problem set. If you do not attend, you will get an incomplete grade for this problem set. If you attend and actively display a good understanding of the paper, it will count positively for your problem set grade.

**Ahead of Monday February 12th, please sign up in groups of 4, using the google doc** [**here**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YAxj13jUDXB8RykFm1dUn-Ktma30eJkpSR_L2SXtYFQ/edit?usp=sharing). Your group should be prepared to take on **both** of the following roles:

1. **Producer of Research**

***General Outline***

1. You should be ready to **present** key parts of the paper in front of the class, **as if** you werethe producer.
2. In general, that includes being able to **briefly and clearly explain** to the audience what the main questions are, why this is important to study, what data and regression method is used. When presenting results (tables or figures), make sure that the audience understands how we should **interpret the results**.
3. Since you are time-constrained, focus on what’s most important in your mind and make sure your **take-away message** is not lost. Skip some less important results if necessary.
4. Since you are the producer of the research, you believe the study is of high quality (internal validity) and in general, you are willing to **defend** many of the assumptions underlying the empirical method.
5. That said, you should think about what the potential limitations of the study are, what potential critique you may anticipate, and **how to best respond** to such critique. You should be prepared to face misconceptions among the audience as to what the study is about and how to interpret the results. You know the data better than they do, and so think especially about various **omitted variables bias** stories that the audience may suggest, and your response to such comments. Be clear, without coming off as dismissive. After all, the audience is here to listen to you before they are interested in your study and you share common interests, so aim to maintain a **positive tone**.
6. If someone from the audience provides a critique that actually **seems reasonable**, then you should not be afraid to acknowledge the point. If a comment is **completely off base**, then you may want to defer to discussing the issue after the presentation. If you get a comment that you **don’t know the answer to**, don’t be afraid to admit that. That said, if you are unable to provide good responses to most questions, it can be awkward and the audience will probably come off with a negative impression overall. Thus, **being prepared is key**.

***Specific Items to Present***

*(Note: which group that presents which item will be randomly drawn in class****)***

There are four separate items your group should be prepared to present:

1. *The main regression results (aim for a 10 minute presentation)*
   * This corresponds to Table 2 and Figure 2, and the text in Sections I.A-B
   * Explain what the results are, and what the data tell us.
2. *Alternative hypotheses* (*10 minutes)*
   * This corresponds to the text in Sections II.A-C
   * Explain what these hypotheses are, and what the data/results tell us
   * Focus mostly on presenting Tables 3 and 4
   * (Ignore Table 5, which employs a nice method we will cover later this semester!)
3. *The Institutional Persistence Hypothesis* (*10 minutes)*
   * This corresponds to Sections III.A-C
   * Explain what this hypothesis is, and how historical accounts and data support it.
   * Focus mostly on presenting Table 6
4. *The Arab Spring: Past as Prologue?* (*10 minutes)*
   * This corresponds to Section IV
   * Explain what hypotheses we are testing here, and what the results say
   * Focus mostly on presenting Tables 7, Table 8 and Figure 5
5. **Consumer of Research**

*(Note: which group that provides comments on which item will be randomly drawn in class****)***

For each item above, after the authors/presenters have presented the results, you shouldbe prepared to provide comments **as if** you are the consumer. For each item, aim to discuss and provide comments for 5 minutes. In particular, you will present two **crisply formulated** comments:

1. What you see as **the main problem** with the presenters’ interpretation of the results.
   * You may want to focus on omitted variable bias if you have a particular bias in mind. In this case, make sure to think through **why** there would be a bias, and **what sign** you would expect. That said; if you think there is some other problem that is more pertinent, then describe that problem.
   * Be sure to maintain a **positive tone**, despite delivering a potentially damaging comment from a scientific perspective.
   * If you like the response from the authors/presenters, acknowledge that. If you are quite dissatisfied with the answer, provide a constructive follow-up comment. If you see no room for potential convergence/agreement, be prepared to simply drop your point, despite feeling you are right.
2. A **genuinely constructive comment** for how you think the research could be improved. For example, you may propose some alternative interpretation of the results, or you may believe some additional analysis could be implemented such as: Other control variables? Other outcomes?)

*(Note: You may want to read the comments starting on page 401)*

**PART II – Regression Analysis using Chaney’s Data**

In this part, you will explore the determinants of democracy using data from the paper you read in part I. Download the file **arab spring.dta,** which contains data of 160 countries.

1. First, generate two new variables corresponding to what was used in the paper:

a) The “Arab Conquest” variable which refers to the proportion of a country’s landmass that was ruled by Muslim dynasties (set Israel=0); name it “arabconquest” (hint: *see the exact definition of the variable in Section I.A of the paper)*

b) The “Non-Arab League, Arab conquest” variable; naming it “nonarabarabconquest”

1. Present a professionally formatted table of the summary statistics of all the variables used in Tables 2, 3 and 4. The goal of this table is to provide the background you would like the reader to have before you present any additional analysis.
2. How many countries in the data are:

a) Arab League countries?

b) Arab conquest countries?

c) Non-Arab League, Arab conquest countries?

d) Muslim-Majority countries?

1. Regress “normpolity” (normalized democracy score in 2010) on “muslimmajority”. For this and all subsequent regressions, use the “robust” option and report all of your regression results in a professionally formatted table. Interpret the coefficient and tests for significance.
2. Now run a second regression, where:

a) You add the variables: arableague, arabconquest, fuel, oceania, europe, asia, americas, africa.

b) Run the same regression, except you replace the variable arabconquest with the variable nonarabarabconquest. Then test the hypothesis that “Arab league countries” have the same normalized democracy score in 2010 as “Non-Arab League, Arab Conquest” countries in the third regression. What does this test show?

c) Add up to three additional control variables of your choice to the second regression (in question 4a). Are the main results robust to the inclusion of these controls?

d) Report and compare your results from the four regressions. What do you conclude about the relationship between Arab Conquest and Democracy?