Objet: Chapter comments

Date: mardi 15 août 2023 à 17:50:18 heure avancée de l'Est

De: Christopher Cochrane

À: Alexandre Fortier-Chouinard

Hi Alex,

I hope you're doing well.

I have some written comments and notes for the chapters:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/e1yj9b1dqqh2lzyvpzjmu/20230708-gender-and-political-development-cc-comments.pdf?rlkey=f6o6qmbgd2jlp34v5y5238fol&dl=0

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/3ulhgljbgak6xsrq67ze9/20230708-data-method-and-descriptives-cc-comments.pdf?rlkey=mfdk3kh7gx50audwpd5efzj99&dl=0

This is a good start on these chapters. To reiterate a few general comments: it will be worth thinking about how you want to organize the dissertation. For example, do you want each chapter to be a standalone, which would require some description and justification of the data, methods, and models in each chapter, rather than depending on a previous chapter to do the work. Each chapter would outline a question; explain the importance of the question for the discipline and its place in the overall dissertation; explain what data is needed to answer the question; outline the data the chapter uses to answer that question (including an explanation of data quality and measures); explain and justify the statistical models; interpret and visualize the results; and conclude with a discussion of the substantive implications for the main question asked in the chapter.

A recurring issue in the drafts is the lack of a benchmarks for results. What does it mean to say women are 0.5/11 points less interested in politics than men? Is this substantial? How does it compare to other kinds of effect sizes? To use a common analogy, if there's a reliable $50 earning difference between university graduates and others, do we need to know why this is and should someone go to university to make more money? Finding a benchmark for discussing the substantive significance of the results will be important.

Another point to consider is to keep each chapter focused on a coherent and systematic answer to a top question. The readers will lose the thread if you divert to race, for example, in a chapter beginning with a lit review focused exclusively on gender. It is also helpful to write about implications of what you mention – for instance, what could a 90% rejection/non-response rate imply, if anything, about the quality of the data? Should we expect this to be a major problem, a minor problem, or is there no way of knowing?

I also recommend walking the reader through tables and figure in-text. In the current draft, the results in tables and figures are mentioned, but there is sometimes little to no explanation for how the tables/figures show those results. The graphs re: age effects are a notable exception, where you do a great job visualizing and explaining the effect.

It may be helpful to step back and consider answering for the reader: why and what do we

need to know about gender and political interest? What data do we need to figure this out? What data do we have? How should we examine it? What does that examination reveal? What should we conclude from this? Structuring each chapter along these lines would help the reader follow along with the logic of the argument.

Happy to meet later this week to discuss further.

Nice work, Alex.

Kind Regards, Chris.