

MY410 Week 9 Seminar

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Comparative case studies

- ▶ **Use and review of literatures:** How do you use the literature to motivate the study? What is the puzzle? Why is this study interesting, in relation to what we already know or assume?
- ▶ **Case selection and scope condition(s):** How do you justify the selection of cases for comparison? What is the evidence that these cases are different on the independent and dependent variables while being mostly similar in other aspects?
- ▶ **Theoretical insights**
 - What is your proposed explanation? Where does the evidence come from? What is the most convincing piece of evidence?
 - Are there any alternative explanations in addition to the main argument?
- ▶ **Generalizability:** Which part of your argument could be generalized to other contexts? What is the scope condition?

Quantitative research design

► Basic components

- The key empirical **question(s)**?
- The key **hypotheses** (empirical or testable implications) based on the theoretical literature?
- The key **independent** (explanatory) and **dependent** (outcome) variables?
- The key **statistical result(s)** we expect to observe in the regression table(s)?

► Advanced components

- Are all necessary **control** variables (covariates) included in the model?
- Are there any additional tests to assess the **robustness** of the main results? Are there any tests to study the **heterogeneous** effect (i.e., do the main findings change if we divide up the observations)?
- What else can be or should have been tested?

Lecture takeaways: Measurement and operationalization

- ▶ Many empirical studies involve the construction of indicators to abstract concepts.
- ▶ The decisions to create indicators are justified with reference to theory, literatures (prior studies), interlocutors, and pragmatic concerns.
- ▶ The measures you choose will often determine the answers you get.
- ▶ A good measure has high validity and reliability.
 - Validity (accurate): Does the measure capture what one seeks to capture?
 - Reliability (precise): Does the measure generate consistent results every time?

Exercise: Women empowerment

“Your NGO has been commissioned to create an index of women empowerment in developing countries. How will your team go about designing your research?”

- ▶ Conceptualization: Concepts and definition? Any theoretical foundation?
- ▶ Measurement: Key indicators of empowerment?
- ▶ Aggregation: How will you bring together and weight the different attributes?
- ▶ Context: Where, when, and why?
- ▶ Data sources and collection?
- ▶ Political and policy implications?
 - How do you reach a consensus about the above?
 - What influence, if any, the funding agency might have in your research? Any other stakeholders that can influence your research?
 - How do you make sure your index helps with policy making?

Exercise: Women empowerment

- ▶ WHO (<http://www.who.int/gho/en/>)
- ▶ UN (<http://data.un.org/>)
- ▶ ILO (<http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/>)
- ▶ World Bank (<http://data.worldbank.org/>)
- ▶ European Social Survey (<https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>)
- ▶ World Values Survey (<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>)
- ▶ Afrobarometer (<http://www.afrobarometer.org/>)
- ▶ Demographic & Health Surveys (<https://dhsprogram.com/data/>)