

POU33011: Assignment 2

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Instructions

- Due date: **Sunday 17:00**, end of week 6. Please submit your document via Blackboard.
- Submit a single document including the R code used and your answers.
- In line with College and the School's marking norms, the maximum mark on this assignment is 75.
- Presentation matters (worth 5% of the mark).

Questions

Research Design (50%)

1. For each of the following fictional statements, identify two reasons why the correlation uncovered may not be indicative of a causal relationship. Use one bullet points for each reason. Briefly discuss each reason in one or two sentences. (10% each)
 - a. "We found that foreign aid to a country increases the probability of that country experiencing civil conflict"
 - b. "We found that a 100% increase in the the number of Tweets about a politician increased their probability of being elected by 12%"
 - c. "We found that countries with more gender-balanced parliaments tend to have a higher life expectancy".
2. For each of the following abstracts, identify the independent and dependent variable as well as the main research hypothesis (5% for each abstract). Be sure to answer using bullet points, e.g:
 - a. *Independent variable*: the number of police forces in a district
 - b. *Dependent variable*: the crime rate per capita in that district
 - c. *Hypothesis*: there is a U-shaped relationship between the number of police forces and the crime rate in a district
 - **Abstract A**: "Theory and extensive evidence connect poverty and underdevelopment to civil conflict yet evidence on the impact of development programs on violence is surprisingly mixed. To break this impasse, we exploit a within-country policy experiment to examine the conditions under which antipoverty programs reduce violence. The roll-out of India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme caused a large long-run reduction in Maoist conflict violence, as measured with an original data set based on local-language press sources. These pacifying effects were not uniform, however, but overwhelmingly concentrated in districts with sufficient pre-existing local state capacity to implement the program effectively. The results demonstrate the potential for anti-poverty programs to mitigate violent civil conflict by improving livelihoods, but also highlight the crucial role of state capacity in shaping these effects."¹
 - **Abstract B**: "Why are politicians more likely to advance the interests of those of their race? I present a field experiment demonstrating that black politicians are more intrinsically motivated to advance blacks' interests than are their counterparts. Guided by elite interviews, I emailed 6,928

¹Source: Dasgupta, A., Gawande, K., & Kapur, D. (2017). (When) Do Antipoverty Programs Reduce Violence? India's Rural Employment Guarantee and Maoist Conflict. *International Organization*, 71(3)

U.S. state legislators from a putatively black alias asking for help signing up for state unemployment benefits. Crucially, I varied the legislators' political incentive to respond by randomizing whether the sender purported to live within or far from each legislator's district. While nonblack legislators were markedly less likely to respond when their political incentives to do so were diminished, black legislators typically continued to respond even when doing so promised little political reward. Black legislators thus appear substantially more intrinsically motivated to advance blacks' interests. As political decision making is often difficult for voters to observe, intrinsically motivated descriptive representatives play a crucial role in advancing minorities' political interests."²

- **Abstract C:** "Development projects like schools and latrines are popular with politicians and voters alike, yet many developing countries are littered with half-finished projects that were abandoned mid-construction. Using an original database of over 14,000 small development projects in Ghana, I estimate that one-third of projects that start are never completed, consuming nearly one-fifth of all local government investment. I develop a theory of project noncompletion as the outcome of a dynamically inconsistent collective choice process among political actors facing commitment problems in contexts of limited resources. I find evidence consistent with key predictions of this theory, but inconsistent with alternative explanations based on corruption or clientelism. I show that fiscal institutions can increase completion rates by mitigating the operational consequences of these collective choice failures. These findings have theoretical and methodological implications for distributive politics, the design of intergovernmental transfers and aid, and the development of state capacity."³
- **Abstract D:** "Research on the impact of parties on public policy, and on immigration policy in particular, often finds limited evidence of partisan influence. In this paper, we examine immigration policy-making in the UK coalition government. Our case provides evidence that parties in government can have more of an impact on policy than previous studies acknowledge, but this only becomes apparent when we open up the 'black box' between election outcomes and policy outputs. By examining how, when and why election pledges are turned into government policies, we show that partisan influence depends not only on dynamics between the coalition partners, but how these dynamics interact with interdepartmental conflicts and lobbying by organised interests. In-depth process tracing allows us to see these complex dynamics, which easily get lost in large-n comparisons of pledges and outputs, let alone outcomes."⁴

Statistics. When relevant, always report the R code used, not just the result. (45%)

3. Import the dataset "assignment2.csv" provided with this assignment. For each of the two variables (gender and political affiliation):

- write a short paragraph reporting values that best describe the variable (max 100 words) and
- produce a (single) plot that best describes the variable.

15% are allocated to each variable. NB: presentation matters.

²Source: Broockman, D. E. (2013). Black Politicians Are More Intrinsically Motivated to Advance Blacks' Interests: A Field Experiment Manipulating Political Incentives. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57(3), 521–536.

³Source: Williams, M. (2017). The Political Economy of Unfinished Development Projects: Corruption, Clientelism, or Collective Choice? *American Political Science Review*, 1-19.

⁴Source: Hampshire, J., & Bale, T. (2014). New Administration, New Immigration Regime: Do Parties Matter After All? A UK Case Study. *West European Politics*, (August), 1–22.