Elizabeth Carlson:

Carlson, E. and Seim, B. (2020) “Honor Among Chiefs: An Experiment on Monitoring and Diversion Among Traditional Leaders in Malawi.” *The Journal of Development Studies* 56 (8): 1541-1557.

Abstract: Traditional, hereditary chiefs are an integral part of the development infrastructure in many African countries. To capture chiefs’ behaviour as agents of development and understand the accountability mechanisms they face, we conduct a field experiment with 200 Malawian village chiefs, documenting how they distribute a valuable development good – iron roofing sheets – as we sequentially add monitoring by donors, subjects, and the state. We find evidence that even in the absence of formal accountability institutions, chiefs are responsive to monitoring by all principals. However, principals have competing demands: while most principals prefer allocations based on need as classified by the local community, a subset of the chief’s subjects – his relatives – prefer to receive sheets themselves, regardless of need. When subjects are informed about the availability of sheets, relatives are able to capture allocations, overriding other principals and causing discontent. Altogether, diversion is minimised when chiefs are monitored by the donor, and only the donor. When chiefs are monitored by all their principals simultaneously, diversion is not significantly lower (compared to control), but dissatisfaction among subjects is greater. This study adds to the literature on chieftaincy and highlights the role of common agency in the design and analysis of development interventions.

Workshop (suggestions?): Field experiment training

Pamela Emmanuelson:

Willer, D., Emmanuelson, P., and Assen, M. v. “Structure, Information and Rationality.”

Abstract: Some decisions in social interactions are information rich such that optimal choices may be possible, while, for others, information is limited, possibly bounding rationality. Does limiting information and bounding rationality necessarily alter interaction outcomes? Is there a systematic relation between information availability and interaction outcomes? Are rational choices ever unbounded? We show that, when actors are endowed with full information the conditions for rationality are satisfied but that limiting information bounds rationality. Having distinguished between ‘strong power’ and ‘semi-strong power structures, ’predictions for interaction outcomes differ when information is complete and do not differ when information is restricted. The predictions are tested using previously reported experimental data and data from new experiments reported here for the first time. All predictions are supported.

Methods: The students will examine negotiation data produced within experimental exchange networks. I’ll walk them through the myriad of decisions involved in cleaning the data and generating meaningful data points. We’ll also look at plotting a simple negotiation process. The analysis is not complicated, but we’ll work through a test for the comparison of means (most likely the pairwise t-test).. The work will be done by hand. That is not uncommon with experimental data sets where n can be quite small depending on how you analyze the data.

Data: I’ll provide negotiation data for two distinct conditions testing a single exchange structure. The data includes all offers, counter-offers and agreements that occur during an exchange negotiation. Data is organized into sessions, each consisting of multiple rounds. I’ll start at the beginning. Students will learn how to read the data sheets. They will learn how to create means for each round. They will make decisions regarding what to include and what to exclude (end effects, learning effects, etc.) and they will learn how to test their hypothesis. I will not be having them collect their own data.

Dan Pemstein:

Abstract: A growing literature attempts to understand the demand side of clientelism: the conditions under which voters participate in, eschew, tolerate, or punish the exchange of targeted material benefits for votes. Scholars posit that income, education, and urban/rural location affect voters’ participation in, and attitudes towards, clientelist exchange. We consider an additional factor that may provide a mechanism for established effects, or may directly cause voters’ behavior and attitudes. Specifically, we ask whether voters perceive clientelist exchanges during the campaign period as substituting for public goods provision in-office, or whether, instead, they think that clientelist exchanges during the campaign period complement future public goods provision. If voters believe that clientelism and public goods provision are substitutes, voters who place great value on future public goods may opt out of clientelism. If, however, voters perceive clientelism and public goods provision as complements, voters may view clientelism as a signal of competency and feel no need to punish clientelist candidates at the polls. We explore these questions in a nation-wide survey in Nepal. Multiple survey experiments provide robust evidence that Nepali voters perceive clientelism and public goods provision as substitutes. Voters who report a belief in substitution also express a preference for candidates who do not engage in clientelism.

Methods: This paper uses an experimental design and multiple types of survey experiments, including a conjoint experiment and a couple of vignette experiments. So we might spend some time on survey design in general, but would focus on causal inference in conjoint experiments (<https://doi.org/10.1093/pan/mpt024>) and also study pre-registration (e.g., using the EGAP registry), power analysis, and other nuts-and-bolts issues with deploying experimental methods in the social sciences these days.

I do my work in R, but conjoint analysis is just OLS with the data organized in a particular way, so one can easily work in Stata as well. I'm happy to work in whichever environment students are most comfortable.

Data: I will provide the students with full replication data from the paper. The might also design their own (conjoint) experiments in qualtrics and collect data from a convenience sample.

Ray March:

I would like to provide a crash course in synthetic control methods. The 6-hour course will introduce the method, review its recent use in policy discussion and NIE research, and provide students with an opportunity to use the method.

The first half of the “course” will review what the synthetic control method provides, its advantages, its shortcomings, and provide examples of the kinds of questions it has been used to address. Students will be asked to review the following readings prior to the class:

Synthetic Control Methods- Kevin Grier (Youtube Video): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PQfeDT8zXM>

Synthetic Control- Scott Cunningham (from Causal Inference: the Mixtape)

<https://mixtape.scunning.com/synthetic-control.html>

After discussing how the method works, I will review the following examples to make sure students understand the application of the method:

Grier, K., & Maynard, N. (2016). The economic consequences of Hugo Chavez: A synthetic control analysis. Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, 125, 1-21.

Magness, P., & Makovi, M. (2020). The Mainstreaming of Marx: Measuring the Effect of the Russian Revolution on Karl Marx’s Influence. Available at SSRN 3578840.

Gietel-Basten, S., Han, X., & Cheng, Y. (2019). Assessing the impact of the “one-child policy” in China: a synthetic control approach. PloS one, 14(11), e0220170.

One of these is a working paper, which provides an opportunity to discuss ongoing research. I will also provide links to students and present the papers as optional readings.

The second half of the class will allow students to use the method to assess the impact of recreational marijuana legalization on obesity rates in Washington State. This is a paper I will have under review shortly (which will hopefully be published by the summer). So students can follow my paper and the example, I will provide the most recent draft before the class. I will also provide the data and code. To allow students to use the code and replicate my results (for hands-on rather than eyes-on experience), I will need a classroom with computers with access to Stata. Students will compute (and discuss) the following:

Summary Statistics

Predictor Mean Comparison

Weighted Average Predictor Matrix

A Synthetic Control Experiment

Pseudo T-stats

In-time Placebo Robustness Check

Largest Donor Dropped Robustness Check

One of the challenges to teaching synthetic controls in a classroom setting is that it takes time to compute results. I will need to use a classroom computer to assess how much time this will take (and adjust how many of the bulleted list topics can be covered in the time allotted). I am available over most of the summer months, so I am flexible.

I think this should be a good learning experience and an excellent contribution to the course. They will discuss one of the most popular quasi-experimental methods used today and leave the class with code they can further develop for their data/ research topics. Let me know if you have any questions.

Veeshan Rayamajhee:

Abstract: Post‐disaster recovery requires co‐production, i.e. citizens' inputs are essential for successful community recovery to occur. Citizens contribute to post‐disaster recovery by volunteering, taking on consultative and decision‐making roles within their communities, and directly participating in post‐disaster reconstruction efforts. Without meaningful contributions from citizens – the intended beneficiaries – unilateral efforts from public officials and authorities will inevitably fail. This study shows that social entrepreneurs can thus play a critical role in spurring post‐disaster recovery by facilitating co‐production. We focus on the role of social entrepreneurs after disasters and center around one rural village, Giranchaur Namuna Basti (GCNB) in the Sindhupalchowk district of Nepal. Specifically, we use the case of Dhurmus Suntali Foundation's Namuna village project in Giranchaur following the 7.8 magnitude earthquake in 2015 as a quasi‐experimental set up to examine the pivotal role that social entrepreneurs play in promoting voluntary activities, community engagement, and participation in post‐disaster recovery efforts.

Note: This paper is forthcoming in Disasters. The paper is a joint work with Virgil H. Storr and Alok K. Bohara.

Methods: I will provide an overview of logit and probit models. Then I will delve into ordered logit model, and calculation of marginal effects and/or odds ratios.

Students must have access to STATA.

Data: I collected the data for this study from a field survey I conducted in 2017. I will provide the relevant dataset to the class.

Dates: June 1-15 (preferred)