

Multiple Linear Regression

Part A: The Best Linear Predictor

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Introduction

In lecture 7, we discussed the Selection on Observables (SO) assumption:

- ▷ Showed that $E[Y|W = w, X = x] = E[g(w, U)|X = x]$ under SO;
- ▷ Derived binning estimator for CATE and ATE for discrete (W, X) .

But binning estimators are not versatile:

- ▷ For continuous/mixed (W, X) , binning estimators are not applicable;
- ▷ Even for discrete (W, X) , may run into the small bin problem.

Need an alternative estimator for the CEF $E[Y|W = w, X = x]$.

The alternative estimator we consider is *multiple* linear regression.

- ▷ Generalization of simple linear regression discussed in Lecture 6.

Introduction (Contd.)

Multiple linear regression has the same pros & cons discussed before:

- ▷ Easy to compute but difficult to interpret...
- ▷ Linear regression does not estimate the CEF directly!
- ▷ Linear regression estimates the *best linear approximation* of the CEF.

We again take two key steps:

- A. Define, analyze and discuss the best linear approximation of the CEF.
- B. Derive and characterize the linear regression estimator.

In contrast to Lecture 6, this time we focus on random *vectors*.

- ▷ Key results will be familiar, but proofs will be different.

Notation: Throughout, vectors are always column vectors. Column vectors can be transformed to row vectors using the transpose-operator. In particular, $x \in \mathbb{R}^p$, $p \in \mathbb{N}$ is a column vector and x^\top is a row vector.

1. Best Linear Predictor
2. Properties of the BLP-Residual
3. Interpretation of the BLP-Coefficients
 - ▷ The Frisch-Waugh Theorem
 - ▷ Generalized Yitzhaki's Theorem
 - ▷ Causal Interpretation under Selection on Observables

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Best Linear Predictor

The best linear approximation to the CEF w.r.t. the L^2 -loss is referred to as the *best linear predictor*.

- ▷ See Problem 5 of Problem Set 4 why this terminology is sensible.

Definition 1 (Best Linear Predictor; BLP)

Let Y be a random variable and $X = (1, X_1, \dots, X_k)^\top$ be a random vector. The *best linear predictor* (BLP) of the conditional expectation $E[Y|X]$ is defined as

$$\text{BLP}(Y|X) = X^\top \beta = \beta_0 + X_1 \beta_1 + \dots + X_k \beta_k, \quad (1)$$

where the BLP-coefficients $\beta = (\beta_0, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_k)$ are such that

$$\beta \in \arg \min_{\beta \in \mathbb{R}^{k+1}} E \left[(E[Y|X] - X^\top \beta)^2 \right]. \quad (2)$$

As before, the BLP is an *approximation* to the CEF:

- ▷ $\text{BLP}(Y|X = x) \neq E[Y|X = x]$ except in very special cases!

BLP-coefficients are known functions of moments of (Y, X) :

Theorem 1

Let Y be a random variable and $X = (1, X_1, \dots, X_k)^\top$ be a random vector. If $E[XX^\top]^{-1}$ exists, then

$$\begin{aligned} \beta &\in \arg \min_{\beta \in \mathbb{R}^{k+1}} E \left[(E[Y|X] - X^\top \beta)^2 \right] \\ \Leftrightarrow \quad \beta &= E[XX^\top]^{-1} E[XY]. \end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

Theorem 1 is hugely convenient:

- ▷ Well equipped for analyzing moments of (Y, X) ;
- ▷ Immediately suggest sample analogue estimator (patience, for now).

Vector Differentiation Recap

As the objective in (2) is convex in β , FOCs are sufficient and necessary.

- ▷ Differentiate with respect to β , set to 0, then solve for β .

The difficulty: $\beta \in \mathbb{R}^{k+1}$ is a vector!

- ▷ Need vector differentiation rules (prerequisites?).

We only require the following rules, stated here without proof:

Lemma 1

Consider $x \in \mathbb{R}^p$, $A \in \mathbb{R}^{s,p}$, $B \in \mathbb{R}^{p,p}$ for $p, s \in \mathbb{N}$. Then

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\partial}{\partial x} Ax &= A, & \frac{\partial}{\partial x^\top} x^\top A^\top &= A, \\ \frac{\partial}{\partial x} x^\top Bx &= x^\top (B^\top + B).\end{aligned}\tag{4}$$

We're now equipped for the proof of Theorem 1.

Proof of Theorem 1

Proof.
$$\begin{aligned} R(\beta) &\equiv E[(E[y|x] - x^T \beta)^2] = E[E[y|x]^2 - 2 E[y|x] x^T \beta + \underbrace{(x^T \beta)^2}_{= \beta^T x x^T \beta}] \\ &= E[E[y|x]^2] - 2 E[E[y x^T | x]] \beta + \beta^T E[x x^T] \beta \\ &= E[E[y|x]^2] - 2 E[x y^T] \beta + \beta^T E[x x^T] \beta \end{aligned}$$

FOC:
$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial R(\beta)}{\partial \beta} &= -2 E[x y^T] + \beta^T (E[x x^T]^T + E[x x^T]) \quad \left| (x x^T)^T = (x^T)^T x^T = x x^T \right. \\ &= -2 E[x y^T] + 2 \beta^T E[x x^T] = 0_{k+1}^T \end{aligned}$$

$\Leftrightarrow 0 = -2 E[x y] + 2 E[x x^T] \beta$ \swarrow Transpose

$\Leftrightarrow E[x x^T] \beta = E[x y]$

$\Leftrightarrow \underbrace{E[x x^T]^{-1} E[x x^T]}_{= I_{k+1}} \beta = E[x x^T]^{-1} E[x y]$ \swarrow $E[x x^T]^{-1}$ exists

$\Leftrightarrow \beta = E[x x^T]^{-1} E[x y]$

Linear Conditional Expectation Functions

The next result gives the *special case* when the BLP is the CEF.

Corollary 1

Let Y be a random variable and $X = (1, X_1, \dots, X_k)^\top$ be a random vector such that $E[XX^\top]^{-1}$ exists. If $E[Y|X]$ is linear, that is,

$$\exists \tilde{\beta} \in \mathbb{R}^{k+1} : E[Y|X] = X^\top \tilde{\beta}, \quad (5)$$

then,

$$= \tilde{\beta}_0 + X_1 \tilde{\beta}_1 + \dots + X_k \tilde{\beta}_k$$

$$E[Y|X] = \text{BLP}(Y|X). \quad (6)$$

Proof. $E[Y|X] = X^\top \tilde{\beta}$

$$\Rightarrow X E[Y|X] = X X^\top \tilde{\beta}$$

$$\Rightarrow E[XY|X] = X X^\top \tilde{\beta}$$

$$\Rightarrow \underbrace{E[E[XY|X]]}_{=E[XY] \text{ L.I.E.}} = E[XX^\top] \tilde{\beta} \Rightarrow \tilde{\beta} = E[XX^\top]^{-1} E[XY] = \beta$$

BLP-coef. by
Theorem 1

Linear Conditional Expectation Functions (Contd.)

$$= \begin{bmatrix} \mathbb{1}_{x_1}(x) \\ \vdots \\ \mathbb{1}_{x_k}(x) \end{bmatrix}^T \begin{bmatrix} E[Y|X=x_1] \\ \vdots \\ E[Y|X=x_k] \end{bmatrix} = \tilde{X}^T \tilde{\beta} \quad \text{supp } X = \{x_1, \dots, x_k\}$$

↑
vector of indicators

$$E_X: d_X=2, \quad E[Y|X] = \mathbb{1}_{x_1}(x)E[Y|X=x_1] + \underbrace{\mathbb{1}_{x_2}(x)}_{=1-\mathbb{1}_{x_1}(x)}E[Y|X=x_2]$$

As before, one should not generally believe that $E[Y|X]$ is linear.

▷ Economic theory rarely motivates severe *functional* form restrictions.

Important exception: When X is discrete, then $E[Y|X]$ is linear in the set of indicators $\{\mathbb{1}_x(X)\}_{x \in \text{supp } X}$ w/o further restrictions: *Let $\text{supp } X = \{x_1, \dots, x_k\}$*

$$\begin{aligned} E[Y|X] &= \mathbb{1}_{x_1}(x)E[Y|X=x_1] + \mathbb{1}_{x_2}(x)E[Y|X=x_2] + \dots + \mathbb{1}_{x_k}(x)E[Y|X=x_k] \\ &= \begin{bmatrix} \mathbb{1}_{x_1}(x) \\ \vdots \\ \mathbb{1}_{x_k}(x) \end{bmatrix}^T \begin{bmatrix} E[Y|X=x_1] \\ \vdots \\ E[Y|X=x_k] \end{bmatrix} = \tilde{X}^T \tilde{\beta} \end{aligned}$$

↑
vector of indicators

vector of conditional expectations

E.g., $d_X=2$, then

$$E[Y|X] = \mathbb{1}_{x_1}(x)E[Y|X=x_1] + \mathbb{1}_{x_2}(x)E[Y|X=x_2] = \mathbb{1}_{x_1}(x)E[Y|X=x_1] + (1 - \mathbb{1}_{x_1}(x))E[Y|X=x_2]$$

Note: Note that $E[Y|X]$ is not guaranteed to be linear in X even if X is discrete! It's important to transform X using indicators: $X = \sum_{x \in \text{supp } X} \mathbb{1}_x(X)x$.

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The BLP-residual is the error when predicting Y using $\text{BLP}(Y|X)$.

- ▷ Convenient object in the analysis of the BLP.

Definition 2 (BLP-Residual)

Let Y be a random variable and $X = (1, X_1, \dots, X_k)^\top$ be a random vector. The BLP-*residual* ε is defined as

$$\varepsilon = Y - \text{BLP}(Y|X). \quad (7)$$

Properties of the BLP-Residual

The BLP-residual is mean-zero and uncorrelated to X .

▷ Importantly: This is not an assumption!

Lemma 2

Let Y be a random variable and $X = (1, X_1, \dots, X_k)^\top$ be a random vector. If $\varepsilon = Y - \text{BLP}(Y|X)$, then

$$E[\varepsilon] = 0, \quad \text{and} \quad E[\varepsilon X] = 0. \quad (8)$$

$\Leftrightarrow E[\varepsilon X^\top] = 0^\top$

Proof.

$$\begin{aligned} E[\varepsilon X^\top] &= E[(Y - X^\top \beta) X^\top] = E[(Y - \beta^\top X) X^\top] \\ &= E[Y X^\top] - \beta^\top E[X X^\top] = -\frac{1}{2} \frac{\partial R(\beta)}{\partial \beta} = 0^\top \end{aligned}$$

Take $e_1 = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ \vdots \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$.

$$\text{Then } 0 = 0^\top e_1 = E[\varepsilon X^\top] e_1 = E[\varepsilon X^\top e_1] = E[\varepsilon \cdot 1] = E[\varepsilon]$$

Properties of the BLP-Residual (Contd.)

In general, the BLP-residual is *not* mean-independent of X .

In particular, if Y is a random variable, $X = (1, X_1, \dots, X_k)^\top$ is a random vector, and $\varepsilon = Y - \text{BLP}(Y|X)$, then typically

$$E[\varepsilon|X] \neq 0, \tag{9}$$

except in very special cases (e.g., when the CEF is linear).

▷ See Problem 1e) of Problem Set 4.

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Interpretation of the BLP-Coefficient β

Note that $\text{BLP}(Y|X)$ is a feature of the joint distribution of (Y, X) :

- ▷ Purely descriptive;
- ▷ Captures the *approximate* expected level of Y associated with a level of X .

Practitioners often calculate the difference in BLPs:

$$\text{BLP}(Y|X = x') - \text{BLP}(Y|X = x) = x'^{\top}\beta - x^{\top}\beta = (x' - x)^{\top}\beta \quad (10)$$

Note that x and x' are *vectors*. Interpretation:

- ▷ β captures the *approximate* expected change in Y associated with a change from $X = x$ to $X = x'$.

Terminology is very important to avoid confusion:

- ▷ Need “approximate” to highlight that $\text{BLP}(Y|X) \neq E[Y|X]$;
- ▷ Need “associated” to emphasize purely descriptive interpretation.

Solving for Subvectors of β

We're often interested in only a *subvector* of the BLP-coefficient β .

- ▷ Often: The component of β corresponding to the policy variable.
- ▷ *Ceteris paribus*-principle.

Consider Y and $(X^\top, W) = (1, X_1, \dots, X_{k-1}, W)$.

- ▷ X is a random vector but W is a random variable.

Let $\beta = (\beta_0, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_{k-1}, \beta_W)^\top = (\beta_X^\top, \beta_W)^\top$ be the BLP($Y|X, W$)-coefficient.

Suppose we're *only* interested in β_W .

- ▷ E.g., because W is the policy variable of interest;

How do we interpret β_W ?

- ▷ β_W just the k th component of β ...

Solving for Subvectors of β (Contd.)

Frisch and Waugh (1933) motivate an alternative interpretation of β_W .

Define

- ▷ $\tilde{Y} \equiv Y - BLP(Y|X);$
- ▷ $\tilde{W} \equiv W - BLP(W|X).$

Then the Frisch-Waugh Theorem shows

$$\beta_W = \frac{\text{Cov}(\tilde{W}, \tilde{Y})}{\text{Var}(\tilde{W})},$$

whenever $\text{Var}(\tilde{W}) > 0$.

Interpretation:

- ▷ β_W is the coefficient of W *controlling* for $X = (1, X_1, \dots, X_{k-1})^\top$;
- ▷ But be very careful: *Controlling* is not *conditioning*!

BLP with De-Meaned Variables

We first consider simply de-meaning the variables under consideration.

Lemma 3

Let Y be a random variable and $X = (1, X_1, \dots, X_k)^\top = (1, X_{1:k}^\top)^\top$ be a random vector. Let $\bar{Y} \equiv Y - E[Y]$ and $\bar{X} \equiv X_{1:k} - E[X_{1:k}]$. If $\beta = (\beta_0, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_k)^\top$ are BLP($Y|X$)-coefficients, then $\beta_{1:k} = (\beta_1, \dots, \beta_k)$ are BLP($\bar{Y}|\bar{X}$)-coefficients.

Proof. $Y = \beta_0 + X_{1:k}^\top \beta_{1:k} + \varepsilon \quad \text{w/} \quad \varepsilon \equiv Y - X^\top \beta$

$$\begin{aligned} \Rightarrow Y - E[Y] &= \beta_0 + X_{1:k}^\top \beta_{1:k} + \varepsilon - E[\beta_0 + X_{1:k}^\top \beta_{1:k} + \varepsilon] \\ &= (X_{1:k} - E[X_{1:k}])^\top \beta_{1:k} + \varepsilon - \underbrace{E[\varepsilon]}_{=0} \end{aligned}$$

$$\Rightarrow \bar{Y} = \bar{X}^\top \beta_{1:k} + \varepsilon$$

$$\Rightarrow \bar{X} \bar{Y} = \bar{X} \bar{X}^\top \beta_{1:k} + \bar{X} \varepsilon$$

$$\Rightarrow E[\bar{X} \bar{Y}] = E[\bar{X} \bar{X}^\top] \beta_{1:k} + \underbrace{E[\bar{X} \varepsilon]}_{=0}$$

$$\Rightarrow \beta_{1:k} = E[\bar{X} \bar{X}^\top]^{-1} E[\bar{X} \bar{Y}]$$



The Frisch–Waugh Theorem

Theorem 2 states a version of the result due to Frisch and Waugh (1933).

- ▷ Arguably one of the most important theorems in econometrics.

Theorem 2 (Frisch–Waugh Theorem)

Let Y be a random variable and $(X^\top, W) = (1, X_1, \dots, X_{k-1}, W)$ be a random vector. Let $\tilde{Y} \equiv Y - \text{BLP}(Y|X)$ and $\tilde{W} \equiv W - \text{BLP}(W|X)$. If $\text{Var}(\tilde{W}) > 0$ and $\beta = (\beta_0, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_{k-1}, \beta_W)^\top = (\beta_X^\top, \beta_W)^\top$ are $\text{BLP}(Y|X, W)$ -coefficients, then

$$\beta_W = \frac{\text{Cov}(\tilde{W}, \tilde{Y})}{\text{Var}(\tilde{W})}. \quad (11)$$

Importantly: The Frisch–Waugh Theorem is a purely descriptive result!

- ▷ As before, the coefficient β_W is a purely descriptive parameter;
- ▷ Do not get fooled by fancy maths...

The Frisch–Waugh Theorem (Contd.)

Proof. $Y = X^T \beta_x + W \beta_w + \varepsilon \quad w/ \quad \varepsilon \equiv Y - X^T \beta_x - W \beta_w$

$$\begin{aligned} \Rightarrow Y - \text{BLP}(Y|X) &= X^T \beta_x + W \beta_w + \varepsilon - \text{BLP}(X^T \beta_x + W \beta_w + \varepsilon | X) \\ &= X^T \beta_x + W \beta_w + \varepsilon - X^T E[X X^T]^{-1} E[X (X^T \beta_x + W \beta_w + \varepsilon)] \\ &= X^T \beta_x + W \beta_w + \varepsilon - X^T E[X X^T]^{-1} [E[X X^T] \beta_x + E[X W] \beta_w + \underbrace{E[X \varepsilon]}_{=0}] \\ &= X^T \beta_x + W \beta_w + \varepsilon - X^T \beta_x - \text{BLP}(W|X) \beta_w \\ &= (W - \text{BLP}(W|X)) \beta_w + \varepsilon \end{aligned}$$

$$\Rightarrow \tilde{Y} = \tilde{W} \beta_w + \varepsilon$$

$$\Rightarrow \tilde{W} \tilde{Y} = \tilde{W} \tilde{W} \beta_w + \tilde{W} \varepsilon$$

$$\Rightarrow E[\tilde{W} \tilde{Y}] = E[\tilde{W} \tilde{W}] \beta_w + \underbrace{E[\tilde{W} \varepsilon]}_{=0}$$

$$\Rightarrow \beta_w = \frac{\text{Cor}(\tilde{W}, \tilde{Y})}{\text{Var}(\tilde{W})}$$

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Interpretation of the BLP-Coefficient β (Contd.)

If $E[Y|X, W]$ is linear in both X and W , then

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial w} E[Y|X, W = w] \stackrel{(1)}{=} \frac{\partial}{\partial x} \text{BLP}(Y|X, W = w) = \beta_W, \quad (12)$$

where (1) follows from Corollary 1.

- ▷ Under linearity, β_W is the CEF derivative w.r.t. W .

The interpretation is appealing but is appropriate only in special cases.

Would like derivative-interpretation for β_W w/o functional assumptions...

- ▷ ... but we don't have one!

Generalized Yitzhaki's Theorem

Angrist and Krueger (1999) generalize Yitzhaki's Theorem (Lecture 6A):

- ▷ Don't restrict $E[Y|X, W]$ but assume $E[W|X]$ is linear.

Theorem 3 (Generalized Yitzhaki's Theorem)

Let Y and W be random variables and X be a random vector. Let β be the BLP($Y|X, W$)-coefficient where β_W is the coefficient corresponding to W . If $E[\text{Var}(W|X)] > 0$ and $E[W|X]$ is linear, then

$$\beta_W = E \left[\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial t} E[Y|W = t, X] \right) \omega(t, X) dt \right], \quad (13)$$

where

$$\omega(t, X) = \frac{(E[W|W \geq t, X] - E[W|W < t, X]) P(W \geq t|X) P(W < t|X)}{E[\text{Var}(W|X)]}$$

Note: Angrist and Krueger (1999) only provide formulas for a discrete variable of interest. Theorem 3 is a slight generalization of their result.

Generalized Yitzhaki's Theorem (Contd.)

Proof.

Skipped. (Check back after the exam!)

Generalized Yitzhaki's Theorem (Contd.)



Generalized Yitzhaki's Theorem (Contd.)

The generalized Yitzhaki weights are such that:

- ▷ $\forall x \in \text{supp } X$, the weights $\omega(t, x)$ are s.t. $\omega(t, x) \geq 0, \forall t$, and $\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \omega(t, x) dt = 1$.
- ▷ $\forall x \in \text{supp } X$, maximum weight reached at $t = E[W|X = x]$ (if density exists at $E[W|X = x]$).

Similar to Yitzhaki's weights but now also w/ expectations w.r.t. X !

- ▷ Allows for precise interpretation as weighted average CEF derivative;
- ▷ But precise interpretation even more difficult w/ inclusion of X !

Are practitioners thinking of Theorem 3 when interpreting β_W ?

- ▷ Recall: When linearity of $E[W|X]$ is not assumed, we don't even have a weighted-average derivative interpretation of β_W !

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Causal Interpretation under Random Assignment

Consider the all causes model discussed in previous lectures:

$$Y = g(W, U). \quad (14)$$

The *conditional average structural function* (casf) is

$$g_1(w, X) \equiv E_U[g(w, U)|X], \quad (15)$$

Conditional effects of marginal changes in the policy variable:

$$g'_1(w, X) \equiv \frac{\partial}{\partial w} g_1(w, X). \quad (16)$$

Practitioners are often content with a summary of $g'_1(w, X)$:

$$\bar{g}'_1 \equiv E_{W,X} [g'_1(W, X)]. \quad (17)$$

▷ \bar{g}'_1 is the expected change in Y *caused* by a marginal change in W .

Causal Interpretation under Random Assignment (Contd.)

\bar{g}'_1 is a function (of the distribution) of U and is thus not identified.

▷ *Need* identifying assumption!

In lecture 7, we saw that under Assumption SO and CS, we have

$$E[g(w, U)|X] = E[Y|W = w, X]. \quad (18)$$

Then simply

$$g'_1(w, X) = \frac{\partial}{\partial w} E[Y|W = w, X]. \quad (19)$$

Under the conditions of Theorem 3, SO and CS, we then have

$$\beta_W = E \left[\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} g'_1(t, X) \omega(t, X) dt \right]. \quad (20)$$

- ▷ Under linearity of $E[W|X]$, SO, and CS, may interpret β as weighted average of the asf-derivative;
- ▷ But β_W is generally distinct from average asf-derivative \bar{g}'_1 .

Causal Interpretation under Random Assignment (Contd.)

The Yitzhaki interpretation for β_W in Equation (20) is often challenging. We thus also discuss a weaker alternative.

$\text{BLP}(Y|W = w, X = x)$ is an approx./ to $E[Y|W = w, X = x]$.

- ▷ Under SO and CS, $E[Y|W = w, X = x] = E[g(w, U)|X = x]$.
- ▷ Hence, $\text{BLP}(Y|W = w, X = x)$ is an approx./ to $E[g(w, U)|X = x]$ whenever SO and CS are assumed.

SO and CS thus motivate an approximate causal interpretation of β_W :

- ▷ Under SO and CS, β_W captures the *approximate* expected change in Y *caused* by a unit-change in W .

Summary

Today, we generalized the BLP($Y|X$) for vector-valued X .

- ▷ Showed the BLP-coefficients are well-defined when $E[XX^\top]^{-1}$ exists;
- ▷ Hopeful that this is a useful alternative to the direct analysis of $E[Y|X = x]$ when $P(X = x)$ is small.

But there is no free lunch...

- ▷ Approximation of $E[Y|X]$ makes interpretation of BLP($Y|X$)-coefficients β challenging;
- ▷ Used Frisch-Waugh Theorem for analysis of sub-vector β_W ;
- ▷ Used Theorem 3 to motivate a weighted-average derivative interpretation of β_W when $E[W|X]$ is linear;
- ▷ Discussed interpretation of β_W under SO and CS.

In Part B, we turn to estimating the BLP-coefficients:

- ▷ Introduce the *ordinary least squares* estimator for β ;
- ▷ Analyze its statistical properties.

References

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- Frisch, R. and Waugh, F. V. (1933). Partial time regressions as compared with individual trends. *Econometrica*, pages 387–401.