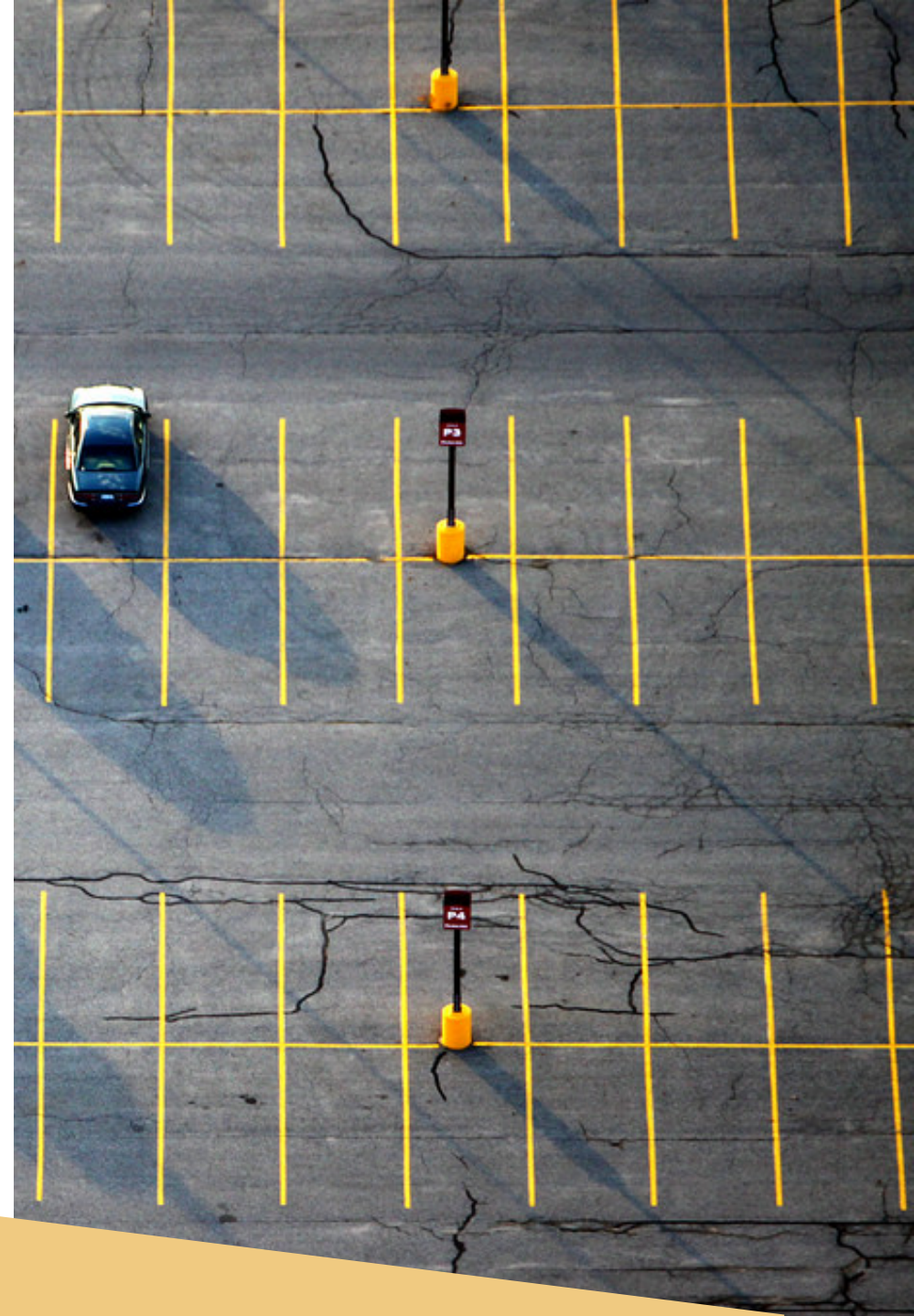


Policy analysis and formation I

MPA 612: Public Management Economics

April 9, 2018

Fill out your reading report on Learning Suite!



Plan for today

Causality and evaluation

Chetshington and WGU

Current events

Causality and evaluation

How do we measure all this evidence?

Causality continuum

Differences

Pre-post

Multiple regression

Matching

Diff-in-diff

Natural experiments

Regression discontinuity

RCTs

Correlation

Causation



Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs)

Gold standard of causality kind of

People can't select into treatment, there are no omitted variables, and reverse causation is addressed

[Article](#)[Supplementary materials](#)[Metrics](#)

Volume 111, Issue 3 August 2017 , pp. 572-583

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Childhood Skill Development and Adult Political Participation

JOHN B. HOLBEIN (a1) 

<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055417000119> Published online: 19 June 2017

Abstract

Recent child development research shows that the psychosocial or noncognitive skills that children develop—including the ability to self-regulate and integrate in social settings—are important for success in school and beyond. Are these skills learned in childhood also important for adult political behaviors like voting? In this article, I use a unique school-based 20-year field experiment to explore whether children who develop psychosocial skills early on are more likely to vote in adulthood than those who do not. Matching subjects to voter files, I show that this intervention had a noticeable long-run impact on political participation. These results highlight the need to better understand how childhood experiences shape civic behaviors later in life. During this critical period, children can be taught the not explicitly political, but still vital, skills that set them on a path toward political participation in adulthood.

Reducing Intimate Partner Violence through Informal Social Control: A mass media experiment in rural Uganda

Research Method

Blocked and clustered field experiment with 6,449 respondents in 112 villages.

Country

Uganda

Co-Authors

Donald Green, Anna Wilke

Partners


Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA Uganda), Peripheral Vision International (PVI)

Research Question

Can mass media shore up informal channels for reducing intimate partner violence?

Abstract

We assess a mass media campaign designed to reduce intimate partner violence (IPV). A placebo-controlled experiment conducted in 2016 exposed over 10,000 Ugandans in 112 rural villages to a sequence of three short video dramatizations of IPV. A seemingly unrelated opinion survey conducted eight months later indicates that **villages in which IPV videos were aired experienced substantially less IPV in the preceding six months than villages that were shown videos on other topics**. A closer look at mechanisms reveals that the IPV videos had little effect on attitudes about the legitimacy of IPV. Nor did the videos increase empathy with IPV victims or change perceptions about whether domestic violence must be stopped before it escalates. The most plausible causal channel appears to be a change in norms: women in the treatment group became less likely to believe that they would be criticized for meddling in the affairs of others if they were to report IPV to local leaders, and their personal willingness to intervene increased substantially. These results suggest that education-entertainment has the potential to markedly reduce the incidence of IPV in an enduring and cost-effective manner.

 **Paper**
[See here for latest working paper.](#)

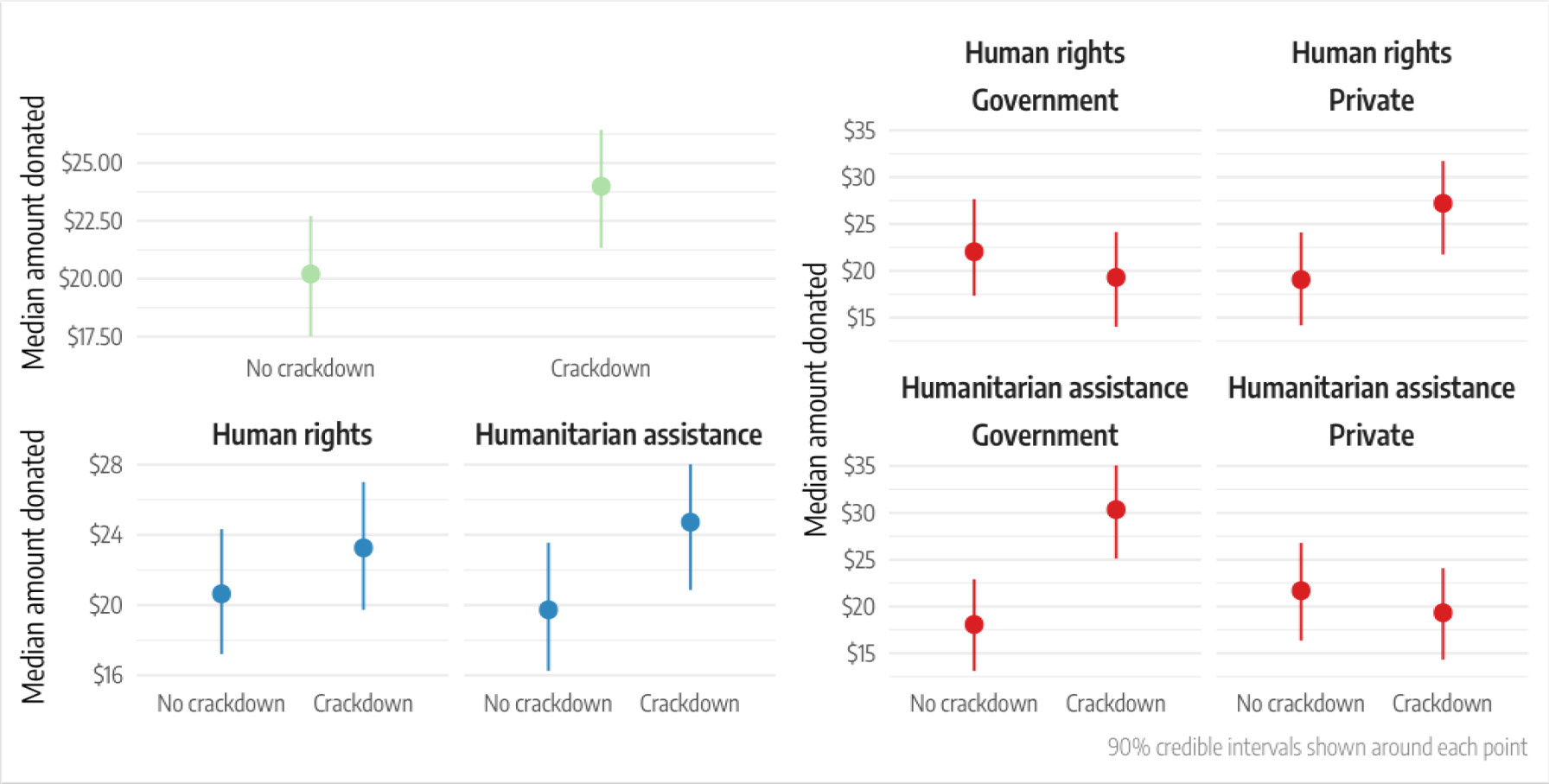
 **Replication Archive**
[Replication by JPAL underway, data forthcoming.](#)

Charity During Crackdown: Analyzing the Impact of State Repression of NGOs on Philanthropy*

Suparna Chaudhry
Christopher Newport University
suparna.chaudhry@cnu.edu

Andrew Heiss
Brigham Young University
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State repression of civil society organizations has become ubiquitous in recent decades. Besides authoritarian states, many democracies have also increasingly used legal tools to restrict their entry, funding, and operations. How does state repression of NGOs impact patterns of private giving? With decreasing funding



BUT

Compliance

Treatment spillovers

Generalizability

Power

Cost

Ethics

Politics

Hawthorne effects

John Henry effects

Natural experiments

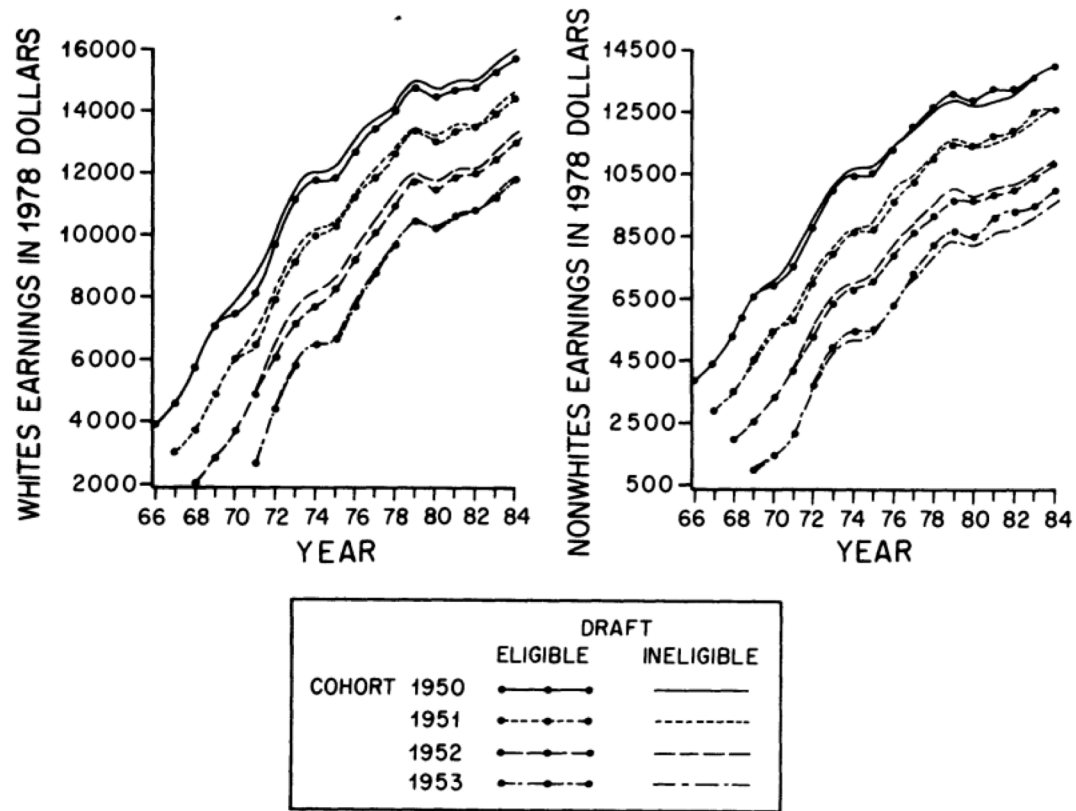
Assignment is random, but not done by researchers

Drafts, lotteries, coin tosses

Quasi experiments

Assignment is not random

Twins, natural disasters, wars



Notes: The figure plots mean W-2 compensation in 1981–84 against probabilities of veteran status by cohort and groups of five consecutive lottery numbers for white men born 1950–53. Plotted points consist of the average residuals (over four years of earnings) from regressions on period and cohort effects. The slope of the least squares regression line drawn through the points is $-2,384$ with a standard error of 778 , and is an estimate of α in the equation

$$\bar{y}_{ctj} = \beta_c + \delta_t + \hat{p}_{cj}\alpha + \bar{u}_{ctj}.$$

FIGURE 3. EARNINGS AND THE PROBABILITY OF VETERAN STATUS BY LOTTERY NUMBER

Rain, Emotions and Voting for the Status Quo

Armando N. Meier[†] Lukas Schmid[‡] Alois Stutzer^{*}

January, 2018

Abstract

Do emotions affect the decision between change and the status quo? We exploit exogenous variation in emotions caused by rain and analyze data on more than 870,000 municipal vote outcomes in Switzerland to address this question. The empirical tests are based on administrative ballot outcomes and individual postvote survey data. **We find that rain decreases the share of votes for political change.** Our robustness checks suggest that this finding is not driven by changes in the composition of the electorate and changes in information acquisition. In addition, we provide evidence that rain might have altered the outcome of several high-stake votes. We discuss the psychological mechanism and document that rain reduces the willingness to take risks, a pattern that is consistent with the observed reduction in the support for change.

Church Attendance, Petty Crime and Rain

70 Pages • Posted: 3 Apr 2018

[Jonathan Moreno](#)

Duke University, Department of Economics, Students

Date Written: March 29, 2018

Abstract

The lack of good data and credible identification strategies have hindered the research exploring the role of religious adherence and church attendance on crime. I provide indirect evidence of the impact of church attendance on crime by using quasi-random variation in the number of Sundays where it rained above a threshold at the time of most religious services. I control for rainfall variation at other times across the year, county and time fixed effects. Based on a panel between 1982 and 2012, I find that one more rainy Sunday at the time of church increases yearly drug related crimes by 1.8%, alcohol related crimes between 1.2 and 1.3%, and 'white-collar' crimes between 0.6 and 1.1%. I do not find an effect for violent crimes. Semi-nonparametric estimations show that these effects start when a county sees eight or more rainy Sundays at church time. I provide evidence that most of these effects are driven by more religious counties. I also present evidence that the effect of religious attendance is greater in areas where there is more crime to begin with. These results are consistent with those found by Gruber and Hungerman (2008).

Keywords: economics of religion, religious attendance, crime

Regression discontinuity

Compare outcomes right before and right after an arbitrary rule

People right before/after rule are essentially the same

Age cutoffs, birthdays, eligibility rules, Ramadan start date, terrorist attacks

Article

Supplementary materials

Metrics

Volume 110, Issue 2 May 2016 , pp. 353-368

Cited by 9

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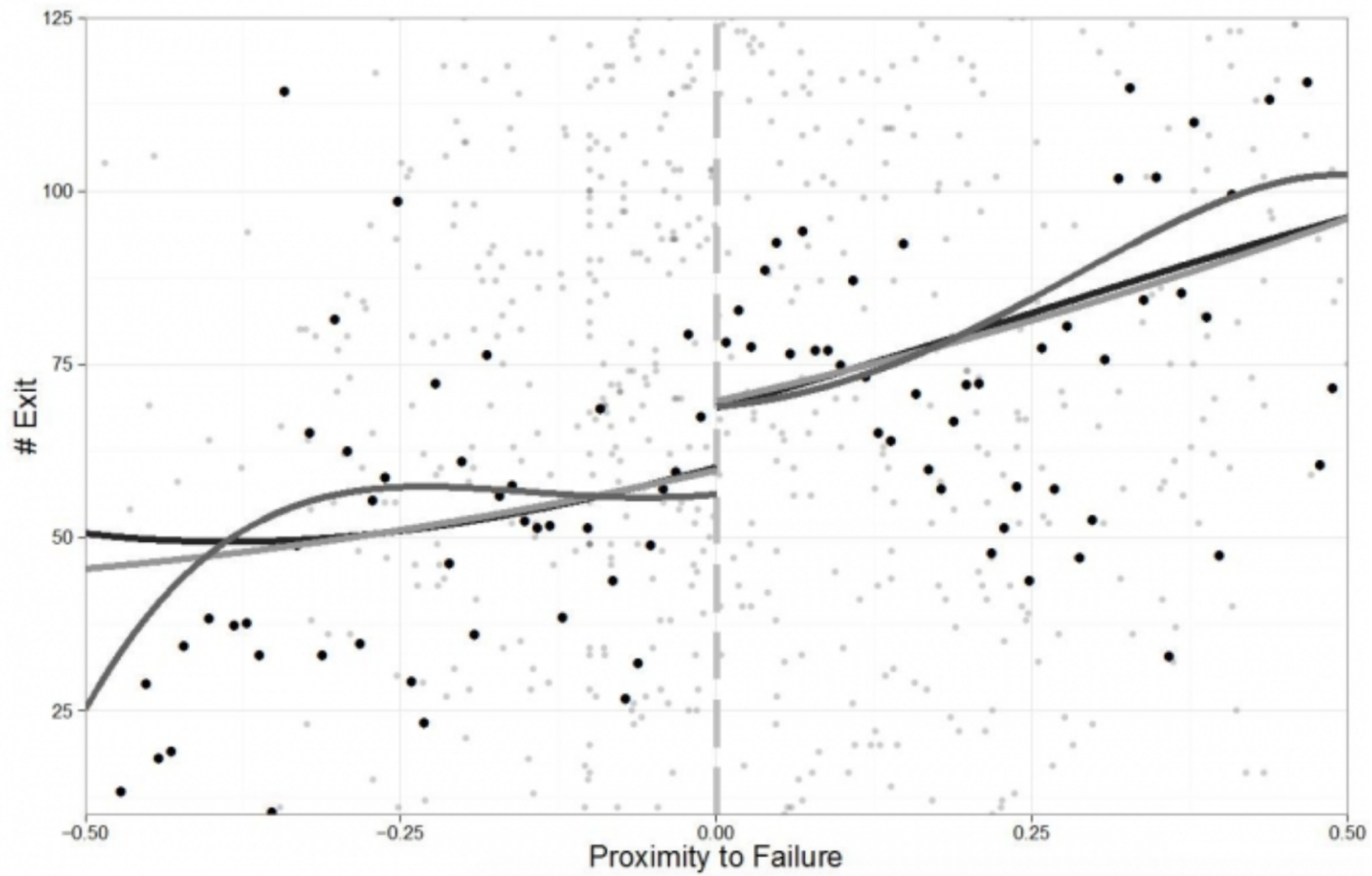
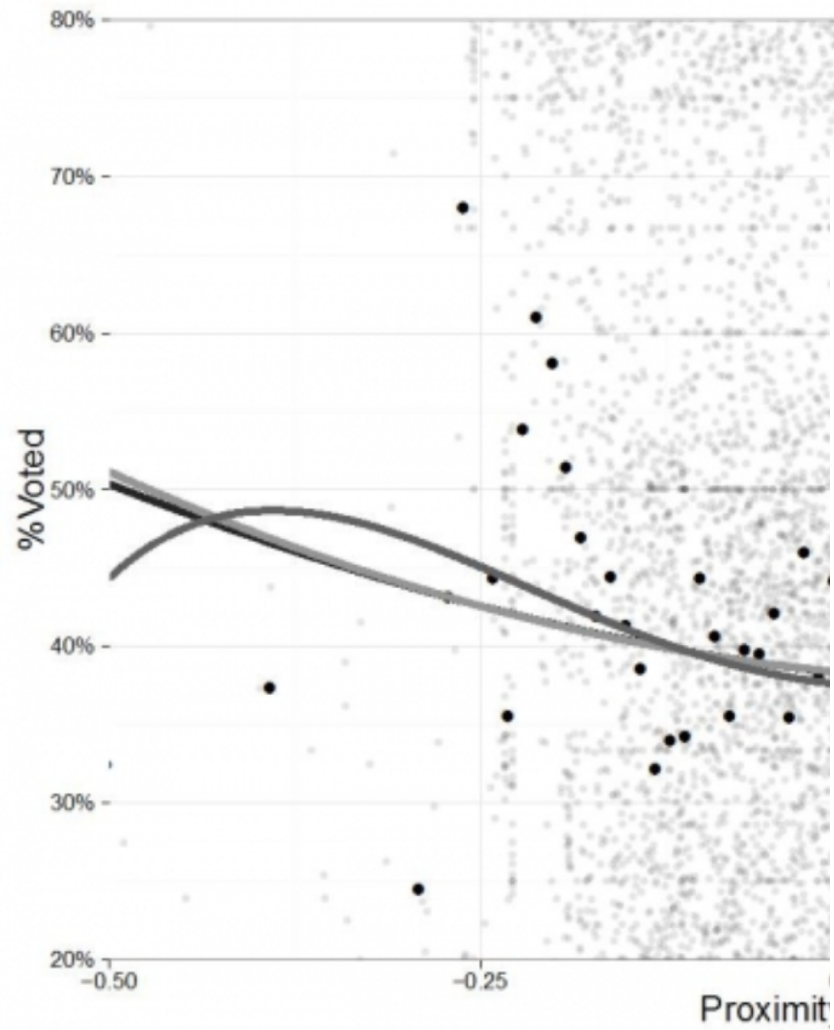
Left Behind? Citizen Responsiveness to Government Performance Information

JOHN HOLBEIN ^(a1) 

<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055416000071> Published online: 01 June 2016

Abstract

Do citizens respond to policy-based information signals about government performance? Using multiple big datasets—which link for the first time large-scale school administrative records and individual validated voting behavior—I show that citizens react to exogenous school failure signals provided by No Child Left Behind. These signals cause a noticeable increase in turnout in local school board elections and increase the competitiveness of these races. Additionally, I present evidence that school failure signals cause citizens to vote with their feet by exiting failing schools, suggesting that exit plays an underexplored role in democratic accountability. However, performance signals elicit a response unequally, with failure primarily mobilizing high propensity citizens and encouraging exit among those who are white, affluent, and more likely to vote. Hence, while performance signals encourage responsiveness, they do so



After Midnight: A Regression Discontinuity Design in Length of Postpartum Hospital Stays*

By DOUGLAS ALMOND[†] AND JOSEPH J. DOYLE JR.[‡]

Estimates of moral hazard in health insurance markets can be confounded by adverse selection. This paper considers a plausibly exogenous source of variation in insurance coverage for childbirth in California. We find that additional health insurance coverage induces substantial extensions in length of hospital stay for mother and newborn. However, remaining in the hospital longer has no effect on readmissions or mortality, and the estimates are precise. Our results suggest that for uncomplicated births, minimum insurance mandates incur substantial costs without detectable health benefits.

Figure 3A: Additional Midnights: Before Law Change

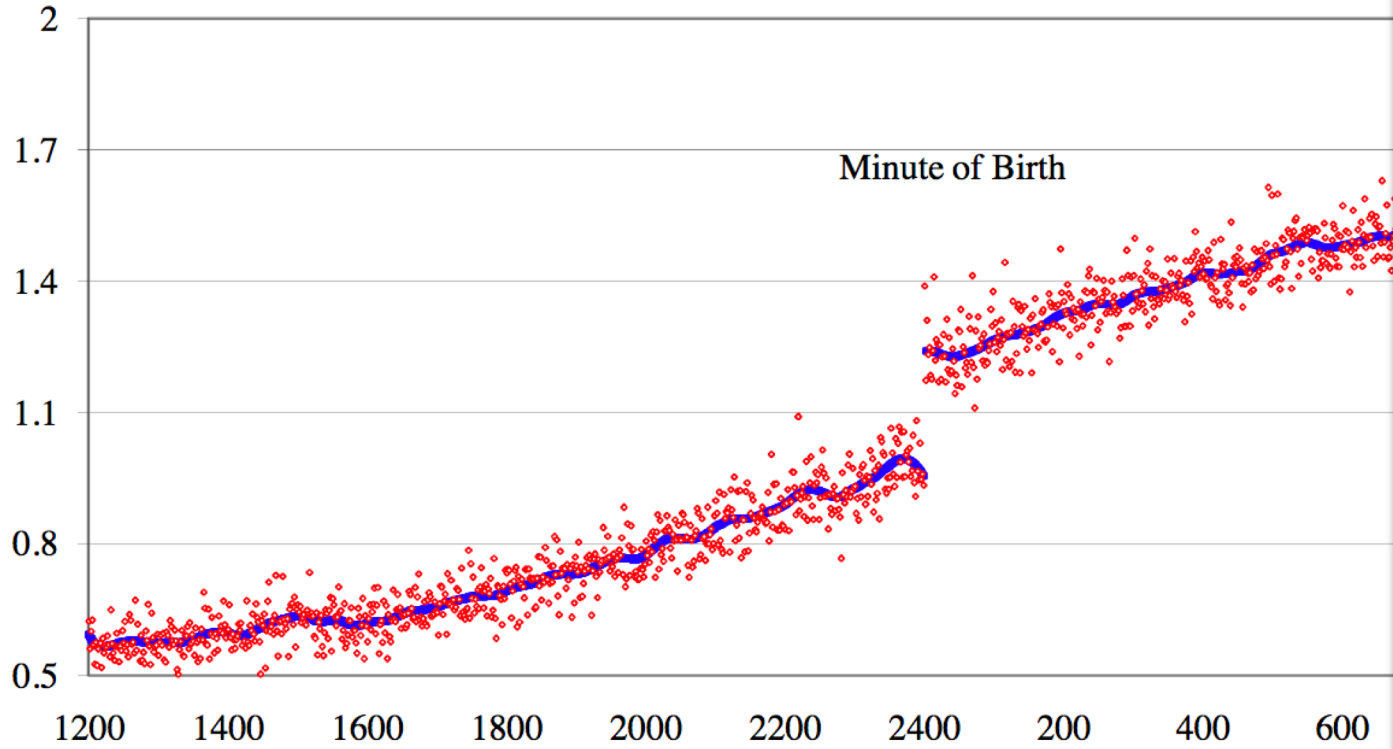


Figure 4A: 28-Day Readmission Rate: Before Law Change

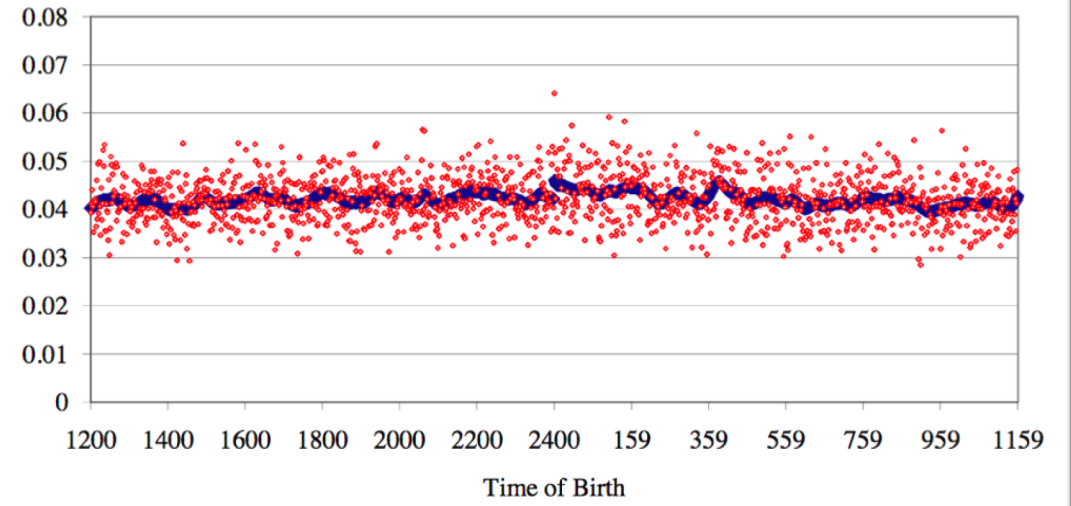
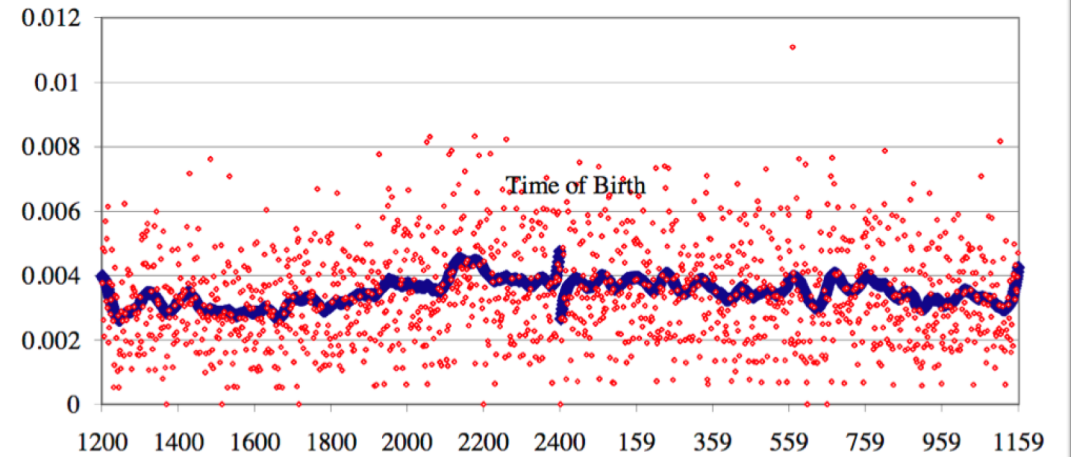


Figure 4C: 28-Day Mortality Rate: Before Law Change



Causality continuum

Differences

Pre-post

Multiple
regression

Matching

Diff-in-diff

Natural
experiments

Regression
discontinuity

RCTs

Correlation

Causation





John B. Holbein @JohnHolbein1 · Apr 7
Causality isn't achieved; it's approached.



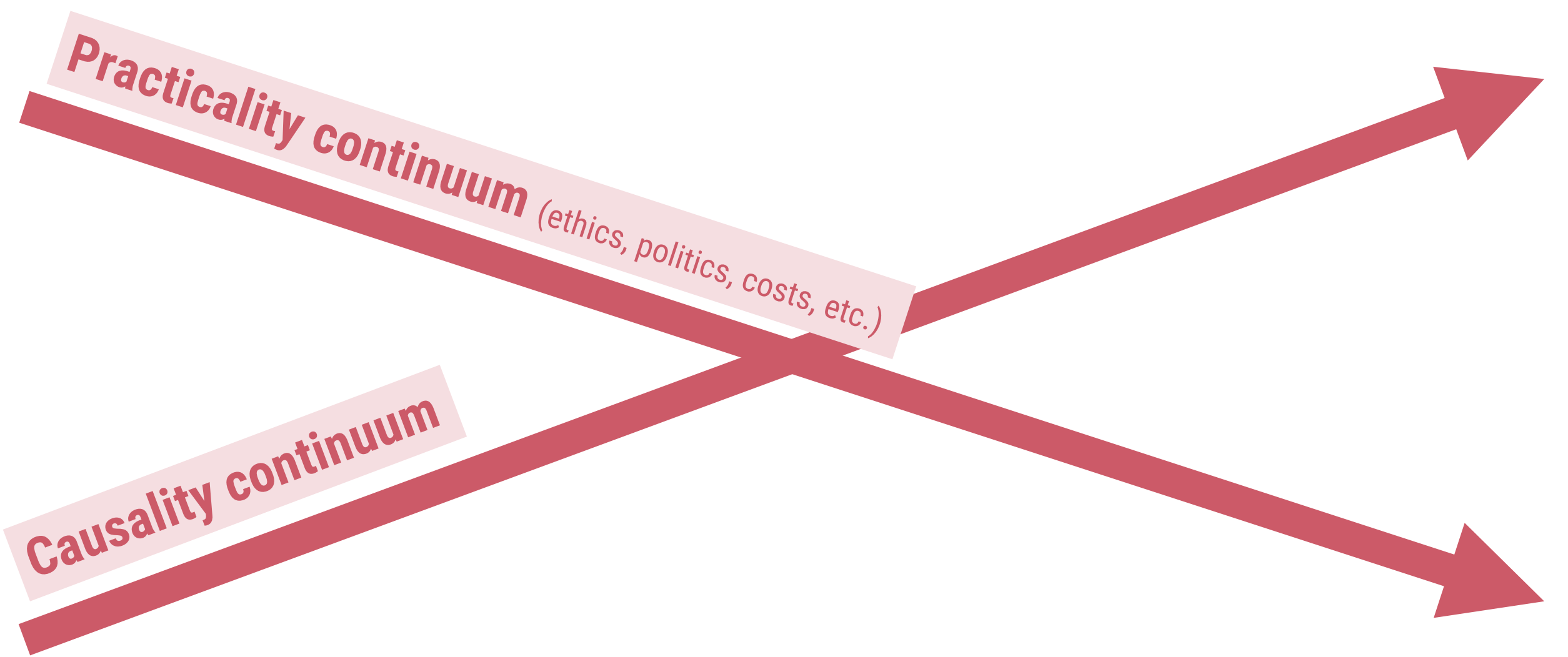
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John B. Holbein @JohnHolbein1 · Apr 7
Causality isn't binary; it's a continuum.



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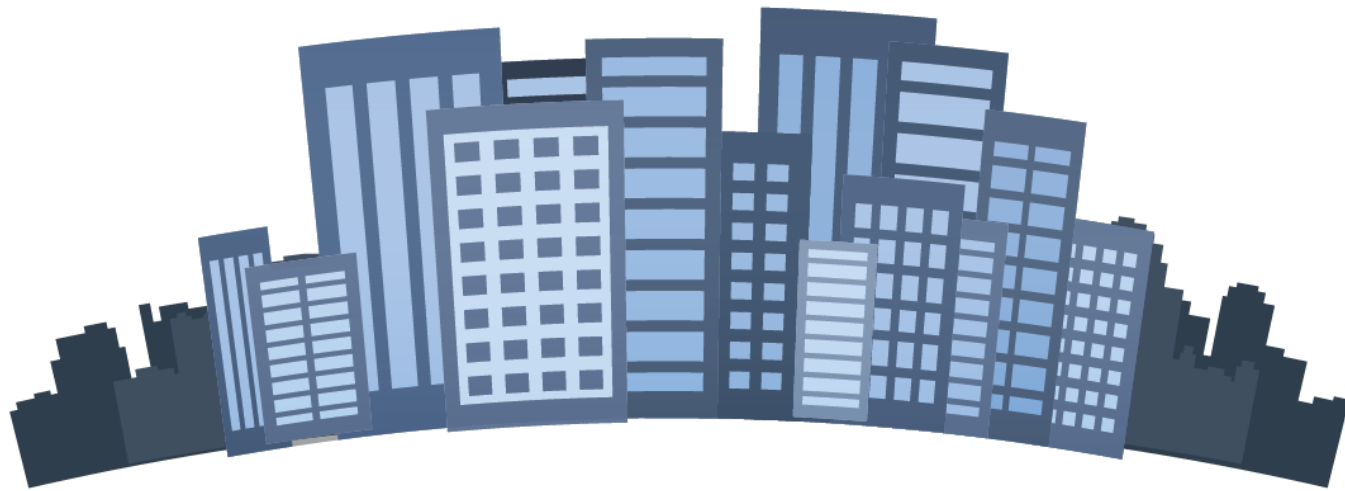


Practicality continuum (ethics, politics, costs, etc.)

Causality continuum

Moral of the story...

**Evidence-based policy
and administration IS
HARD AND COMPLEX**



CHETSHINGTON

