

Survey Experiments

Week 2 (Regular course)

Duration: 12 hours

Format: In person and online

Instructor: Jordi Muñoz

Course description:

This is a crash course on the logic, types, and practicalities of survey experimental research. The goal is that students become familiar with the method, so they can critically assess survey experimental work and become able to design good survey experiments on their own research topics.

First, we will discuss the idea of causal identification and how survey experiments relate to it. We will specify the conditions under which we can use survey experiments to estimate causal effects. Then, we will introduce the students to the history and different types of survey experiments, mostly (but not only) in Political Science literature. Through the review of multiple examples of published survey experiments, we will become familiar with the main and best types of survey experimental research. Finally, we will discuss all the practical elements that we need to consider when designing, fielding, and analyzing our own survey experiments to produce high quality research.

During the course, the students will work on a proposal for a survey experiment, that will be discussed in class. Moreover, we will devote some time to the practical analysis of survey experimental data using either R or Stata, at their preference. Detailed and commented R codes for randomization, power analysis and estimation of various types of treatment effects will be shared. Finally, after the course, the students will be offered the opportunity to submit a proposal of a survey experiment linked to their own research and get feedback from the instructor.

Learning schedule:

Day 1	9:00-9:30	Welcome and introduction. Presentation of the course
	9:30-10:45	Why do we need survey experiments? Causality in empirical research
	10:45-11:15	Coffee Break
	11:15-12:00	Random assignment and identification of treatment effects
	12:00-13:00	Students discuss how they would address empirically (using a survey experiment) a causal question posed by the instructor

Day 2	9:00-9:30	Survey experiments: history and uses
	9:30-10:45	Types of survey experiments by example
	10:45-11:15	Coffee Break
	11:15-12:00	Design of survey experiments: Realism vs stylized designs. Treatment design and outcome measurement. Precision and placebo conditions.
	12:00-13:00	Students prepare in pairs a proposal of a survey experiment

Day 3	9:00-10:45	Implementing survey experiments effectively. Pre-registration. Manipulation checks. Sample size and power.
	10:45-11:15	Coffee Break
	11:15-12:45	Lab session. Calculate power, analyze and visualize survey experimental results. Analysis of survey experiments

	12:45-13:00	Recap. Ethics in survey experiments.
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Prerequisites: Some basic knowledge about surveys and basic statistics is preferable.

Software: The materials will be in R, but support for Stata users will be provided.

Readings:

- Druckman, J. N., & Green, D. P. (Eds.). (2021). *Advances in experimental political science*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hainmueller, J., Hangartner, D., & Yamamoto, T. (2015). Validating vignette and conjoint survey experiments against real-world behavior. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 112(8), 2395-2400.
- Imai, K., Keele, L., Tingley, D., & Yamamoto, T. (2011). Unpacking the black box of causality: Learning about causal mechanisms from experimental and observational studies. *American Political Science Review*, 105(4), 765-789.
- Gaines, Brian J., James H. Kuklinski, and Paul J. Quirk. 2007. "The Logic of the Survey Experiment Reexamined." *Political Analysis* 15: 1–20.
- Sniderman, Paul M. 2011. "The Logic and Design of the Survey Experiment: An Autobiography of a Methodological Innovation." In *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*, eds. Druckman, Green, Kuklinski, and Lupia, 102–14. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press.



Instructor short bio: I am an associate professor of Political Science at the University of Barcelona and the director of the Public Opinion Center of the Catalan government. I do research on comparative political behavior and public opinion. I was the leader of the POLEXP network, and promoted the Barcelona-Gothenburg-Bergen Workshop on Experimental Political Science.

I have published several works using survey experiments to address various substantive topics. For example, I have published survey experimental work at the *Journal of Politics*, on coalition signals, at the *Journal of Peace*

Research, on political violence, at Comparative Political Studies, on corruption and voting, at Political Analysis, on Unexpected events during surveys designs, at the EPSR, on support for independence in Catalonia or at Party Politics, on inference of positions across issue dimensions.