

Instructions for One-Page Proposal

PPPA 8022
Spring 2020

Wednesday January 29, you must turn in a one-page (max two-page) proposal for your empirical replication project. Save a tree – don't make a cover sheet! I will provide comments within a week so that you can get to work.

The goal in this replication project is for you to engage with issues of causality through an empirical lens. When selecting a paper, be sure that the paper is making a causal claim and that one of the following is true: (a) the paper has an empirical strategy for identifying a causal effect or (b) you have an empirical strategy for identifying a causal effect that you can add to the paper.

Begin by reading the *Public Finance Review* article I've linked to on the syllabus under the "Handouts" section. Broadly, these are the terms of reference for the first part of this project, with the exception that the paper will probably be a little shorter than a full-length manuscript given the time constraints of the semester. That means that your first task is to replicate the author's findings with the original data.

The second task of this assignment is to extend the paper you're replicating. "Extend" is up to your definition. You could add years, analyze a different country, add a key control variable, or whatever you can think of. In general, a good extension will provide a test of a contention in the paper.

To maximize your chances of success and good advice from me, use a technique that we study in this class, or one that is closely related.

In your one-page proposal, I expect that you will

- Identify the paper you'd like to replicate
- Identify if you are working by yourself (required for PhD students) or with a partner
- Confirm to me that the data are accessible. This means download and unzip them, not have a vague idea that they exist.
- "Accessible data" does not mean that you can download the data from the journal website. You will need to create the dataset yourself from primary sources and submit stata files that document this.
- If you plan to replicate on a different dataset, explain why that's of interest
- Explain how you plan to extend the paper

Evaluation

- The measure of success is not whether you are able to exactly match the published results.
- A successful paper can match the results
 - explain what steps you took to do so
 - expand on the specifications presented in the paper, assessing how robust they are
 - interpret the qualitative significance of the alternative specifications
- A successful paper can also fail to match the results
 - explaining what the steps you took to attempt to match
 - offer hypotheses as to why the match was unsuccessful
 - interpret the qualitative significance of the failure to match
 - evaluate whether the results are robust to alternative specifications

- Either type of paper should be clear and organized. This applies to the paper as a whole, and to the explanation of the empirical strategies and concerns about causality.
- A successful extension of a paper
 - is not an addition without intellectual value
 - extends what we learn from the paper

See previous years' most successful papers on the course webpage.