DOCTORAL SEMINAR:  
CAUSAL ANALYSIS AND STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING  

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Instructor office hours: By appointment  
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Assistant Office hours: Monday 1000-1200 or by appointment  
Class meets: Wednesday, 1300-1700; Room 261 Internef (aka “Fame Lab”)  
Credits: 6 ECTS  
Registration: To register contact the Doctoral School secretary, Benedicte Moreira (Benedicte.Moreira@unil.ch)  
Website: Moodle (password will be e-mailed to registered students)  

COURSE DESCRIPTION  

The use of structural equation modeling (SEM) and advanced regression methods have mushroomed in the past couple of decades. Today they are widely recognized as one of the most powerful and most comprehensive methods for testing causal hypotheses. Knowledge of causality is essential for informing policy and practice.  

The purpose of this theory and lab seminar is to familiarize the students with conceptual bases of SEM and regression as well as applications necessary to undertake doctoral-level research and to answer questions of causal interest. Students will learn to critically think about causal relations, particularly in the design of studies, measurement of variables, and testing of theories. There will also be many demonstrations and hands-on exercises using Stata so that students have the necessary tools to analyze causal hypotheses correctly. Students will also learn basic programming commands in Stata as well as some fundamentals of Monte Carlo simulation (the software is supplied in the laboratory).  

COURSE CONTENT  

In this course, students will learn about:  

1. Endogeneity and causality  
2. Advanced regression topics, including interpreting and testing interaction models, errors-in-variables models, instrumental variable estimators, fixed- and random-effects models, polynomial regression and response surface methodology, and simultaneous equation models,  
3. SEM models including confirmatory factor analysis, latent variable models, higher-order models, multisample models, growth curve models, and model implied instrumental variables,  
4. Monte Carlo analysis  

Antonakis – Causal Analysis and SEM, Spring 2015
The course is designed as a doctoral seminar, though a very structured one so as to maximize student learning. Students are very strongly advised to do assigned pre-readings and homework, because they are essential in helping students understand the course material and being well prepared to successfully pass the project and final examination.

**ASSESSMENT**

1. 10%: Critique of articles (regarding weeks 10 and 12)
2. 30%: Project: Monte Carlo experiment (submitted paper and final presentation)
3. 60%: Final exam (open book exam)—theory and practice

Resit: The mark for students who fail the course will be composed of the marks received in component (1) (which cannot be redone) and a (2) resit project (i.e., this will be a new project) and/or a (3) resit final exam, weighted as per the above; note, the “and/or” depends on whether (2) or (3) or both (2) and (3) were failed. Students must resit the component/s failed; in the event that a pass cannot be obtained by resitting only (2) or (3), then both (2) and (3) must be redone.

Note: for the project and article critiques, please submit to my assistant by e-mail using the following specifications: Double-spaced, using Times New Roman font (12 points) with default margins (2.5cm all around). Include a cover page (not counted in the page requirement) indicating your name and the type of assessment.

Important: For all work you do, please submit original work. For any project work you do or during the exam, please cite correctly and do not plagiarize; I have failed students in the past for plagiarism (and have a good nose for it) so please do not even let it cross your mind to use someone else’s work without correct attribution. If you don’t know how to cite correctly refer to a style guide like that of the APA (American Psychological Association).

**PROJECT BRIEF FOR ARTICLE CRITIQUES**

This project will consist of applying the concept acquired in the class to critiquing 6 papers across various management disciplines. You will be required to read the assigned papers and be prepared to discuss each of the papers. We will spend about 30-45 minutes on discussing each paper and every student will partake in the discussion.

You are also required to write max. 2 page critique per paper (which you must send to the course assistant by e-mail before 13h00 for each session on 29-4-2015 and 13-5-2015). For each relevant week please (a) send everything in one file (and not separate files), (b) follow the formatting guidelines for the critique (see point in previous section), (c) clearly list (number) each of the pitfalls and each of the solutions, and (d) submit articles in the order in which I have listed them in the syllabus. For each paper critiqued:

1. Explain the basic model that was estimated by the authors (20% of mark)
2. Discuss critical errors that the authors made (40% of mark)
3. Explain how the model could be estimated to ensure correct identification of the causal effect (40% of mark).
The following paper is essential background reading for the critiques:


Pull out a few of the papers that Antonakis et al. (2010) coded, read them, and see what critical errors we found. Note: There may be several problems and issues with each of the papers. Please focus on identifying the major ones (and don’t spend time talking about very minor ones like “they did not use a robust variance estimator” or “they did not check for heteroskedasticity”); look for issues that render estimates inconsistent. If you give several substantive (i.e., about 5-6) examples of problems and tangible ways to deal with them you will receive full marks for the paper critique. We will give you progressively fewer marks as the substantive content of the critique is reduced. Note, too, that describing the paper is only 20% of the mark, and the rest is on the critical errors and solutions; so please do not spend too much space on describing the basic model that was estimated. Please ensure you put the meat where the meat is needed. To get an idea of what “substantive” means, read the following paper, which on first reading may look like a very strong paper, particularly because it was published in a top journal:


However, here are some important issues with the paper that could have been critiqued:

**Study 1**

1. The sample self-selected, particularly to work shift; thus, there is a potential grouping variable (which is endogenous) and which is not controlled for using some sort of IV procedure.
2. The data are all self-reported data, which creates a problem of common methods variance (in addition to the untrustable data on the dependent variable). It would have been better to split the data-gathering and having bosses or peers report on the DVs.
3. Reverse causality is possible in the sense that those who are irritable and aggressive may sleep less; the way to deal with this is to randomize to sleep deprivation condition or to find instruments (e.g., age, personality might predict sleep).
4. The estimator is not an IV-estimator; it was estimated with OLS (and to the extent that the mediator is endogenous, failure to use an IV estimator will engender inconsistent estimates). Thus, they should have used 2SLS or ML (with disturbances correlated).

**Study 2**

5. There is a confound in the manipulation (i.e., sleep deprivation with putting people in a group all night long—being in a group, when in a difficult situation, could have made grumpy)—this confound induces endogeneity. Thus, the control group should have had this manipulation too (or the experimental group should not have had it).
6. The regressors are endogenous; thus, their effects on outcome must be tested with an IV estimator (as per (4) above).
7. Related to the above, the problem with testing the whole model with an IV estimator is that it is impossible to do because the system of equations is under-identified (i.e., DF
Thus, they should have included more exogenous variables as instruments or manipulated a second variable (crossing it with sleep deprivation).

8. There are omitted control variables (e.g., sex, age, etc.) that are not included in the regression model. The controls are essential because of the small sample size it is possible that randomization to treatment (across sex, age, personality, what have you) is not perfect.

So, the above are examples of “meaty” comments. Thus, please ensure to make tangible and context-specific recommendations that are of substance.

**PROJECT BRIEF FOR MONTE CARLO EXPERIMENT**

The project consists of undertaking a Monte Carlo analysis to answer a specific question about a (apparently widely accepted) rule of thumb. Examples, which can be used by students include:

- The chi-square test of fit is too powerful to assess overidentification, particularly at large sample sizes (Hu & Bentler, 1999)
- Approximate fit indices indicating RMSEA < .06 and CFI > .95 indicate a good fitting model that can be causally interpreted (Hu & Bentler, 1999)
- Factor loadings should be at least .30 for interpretable results (many references for this, but see Olatunji et al., 2007 as an example)
- Independent variables should not correlate more than .70 or .80 with each other to avoid issues related to collinearity and singularity (many textbook sources for this)
- VIFs should be less than 10 to ensure stable results (this is a widely reported rule of thumb).
- Control variables that do not correlate significantly with y should be excluded from the predictive model (cf. Becker, 2005)
- Interactions are not that much affected by common-method variance (cf. Evans, 1985)
- Common-method variance (with respect to x and y) can be eliminated by including a latent common-method factor (Loehlin, 1992).
- At least 20 observations are required for each parameter estimated in SEM models (Kline, 2010)
- A model with 10 parameters should have a sample of at least 100 (Kline, 2010)
- At least 10 observations are required for each variable in a regression model (several sources on this)
- Etc.

Note, if you are going to choose one of the examples above, please send an e-mail ASAP to the course assistant. Only one student can work on each of the above topics (unless what is studied is substantially different); thus, we will operate on a first come first serve basis. You will need explicit approval from my assistant, in writing, to confirm the topic you have chosen is OK (and we will give you formal feedback on the direction you are taking with your project as indicated in Weeks 10 and 11).

The goal of the project is thus to identify some rule of thumb, reported in a textbook, methods piece, or applied piece, and then to either debunk or to find support for it (at the least you must show something new; if you will find support for the rule of thumb then do so with manipulating a dimension that has not been manipulated previously). Keep the model as...
simple as possible and vary sample size across a few increments and then manipulate at least two parameters (or more) of interest. I will, of course, give you a few examples of how to do this. Note, if the trends you observe are not obvious to the naked eye, you may wish to conduct tests on the trends as a function of the manipulations (e.g., use trends as a DV and the manipulations as an IV to see what affects the DV; see the Bastardoz & Antonakis, 2014 paper for more information on how to do this).

The project (and the presentation slides that you will use to present it) must be submitted to the course assistant by e-mail before 12h00 on Wednesday 20-5-2015. We will mark your project on the following:

1. 10%: Introduction to the rule of thumb; literature review showing a few examples of the rule of thumb (1-2 pages max).
2. 5%: Discussion of why the rule of thumb may not or may be necessary valid for particular contexts (1 page max).
3. 20%: Set up of the Monte Carlo simulation (i.e., the program)
4. 15%: Presentation of the results of the Monte Carlo simulation (visual/graphic)
5. 15%: Discussion and interpretation of the results of the Monte Carlo simulation
6. 5%: Writing style, logic, general presentation
7. 30%: In-class oral presentation and answering of questions

The project should be between 8-10 pages long; please give a title to the project (e.g., “Can RSMEA be trusted to detect misspecified models?”—giving the title in question format is a good idea because it provides focus). Please include the code you used for the Monte Carlo as an Appendix in the project (not counted in the page length) and not as a separate attachment.

You will present the project in class as per a randomly determined schedule (be prepared to present on the both Wednesday 20-5-2015 and Wednesday 27-5-2015). I will confirm a few weeks before how long the presentation will be (it depends on how many students will take the class but count on a presentation of about 30-45 minutes, including Q&A).

Note about the project:
There is one simple recipe to succeed on this project—carefully follow the examples in class from the first lesson, do all the homework, and check your homework against the code we give you. The class gradually builds up so ensure that you really understand everything from the first lesson. Do not fall behind! Falling behind = high probability of failure!

Learning basic programming skills now will help greatly for your Monte Carlo; more importantly it will help you in the long term too. Once you know Monte Carlo, this will help you in publishing empirical papers (I will show you examples of this in class where Monte Carlo analysis helped me to publish papers that were not about Monte Carlo per se).

Finally, I or my assistant will not debug your code for you; the sooner you come to us for help with specific questions about your code the more we can and will help you. But please do not send us a bunch of code, screaming in desperation “my code doesn’t work!” You need to do the debugging yourself because this part of the learning experience. And, finally, please do not leave the programming for the last minute; that would be a guaranteed recipe for failure. Here are some example projects to give you an idea of what has been done previously:

- Should factor loadings should be at least .30 for interpretable results?
• What is the minimum required sample size in regression models? Relative bias of two-stage least square (2SLS) and ordinary least square (OLS) estimations
• Approximate fit index RMSEA: A Monte Carlo experiment on a rule of thumb
• When the cure is worse than the disease: A Monte-Carlo experiment to test if “Common-method variance (with respect to x and y) can be eliminated by including a latent common-method factor”
• Should control variables only be included in a model under the condition that they correlate with the dependent variable?
• Is the chi-square test of fit is too powerful to assess overidentification, particularly at large sample sizes?
• Ratio of sample size to parameters for regression models
• Should independent variables not correlate more than .70 or .80 with each other to avoid issues related to collinearity and singularity?
• Impact of common-method bias on the interaction term – modelled as an omitted variable issue
• Are at least 20 observations required for each parameter estimated in SEM models?
• Should groups’ ratio in a sample not exceed 1:2 allocation to avoid a serious loss of power.
• Should control variables that do not correlate significantly with y be excluded from the predictive model?
• Common-Method Variance – A test of a potentially more accurate post-hoc technique
• Does a Cronbach alpha superior (or equal) to 0.7 really absolve you from modelling measurement error?
• Can a weak instrument be detected with an F-statistic smaller than 10?

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1; Wednesday 18-2-2015

Topic: Introduction to the course. Introduction to participants. Testing causal hypotheses with experimental research and the need for exogenous manipulation; introduction to SEM and regression. Basic notations for regression and path diagrams.

Lab topics: Familiarization with Stata; basic data manipulation; estimating basic models.

Review the following commands by typing “help [command]”; then run the commands using the systems data set that is noted in the help file. Note, many of the commands can be abbreviated; and many of the commands can be used with the menus. We will use the following commands:

Basic operations with respect files: clear, use, edit, sysuse, save, preserve, restore
Basic operations with respect to variables: describe, list, summarize, codebook, generate, label, replace, egen, keep, drop, recode, tabulate, tabulate (for generating dummy variables, i.e., “tab country, gen(d)”) Basic operations to manage data: sort, gsort, order, reshape, merge
Basic operations with respect to estimation: pwcorr, corr, ttest, anova, regress, logit, probit

Keeping track of your work: do files, log files.

Installing user-written commands: ssc install, findit

Week 2: Wednesday 25-2-2015

Topic: The problem of endogeneity:
1. Basic omitted variable bias
2. Errors-in-variables (using least squares and sem)
3. Common-method variance


Lab topics: Generating data with known structures (generate a data set in which x is endogenous). Generating data with loops. We will use the following commands or command options (-[option]-):

set obs, set seed, gen, -rnormal(), foreach, regress, alpha, eivreg, sem

Week 3: Wednesday 4-3-2015

Topic: Regression models in Stata
1. Multiple IVs and dummy variables (and coefficients); relation to ANOVA
2. Nested model F-test and hypothesis tests (Wald tests)
3. Marginal effects
4. Interactions (estimating and plotting)
5. Testing congruence (brief introduction)—see notes on Moodle
6. Regression diagnostics


Suggested reading: (Practical example) 1. Lee, Y. T., & Antonakis, J. (2014). When Preference Is Not Satisfied but the Individual Is: How Power Distance Affects Person-Job Fit. Journal of Management, 40(3), 641-675. (Scan this to see what can easily be done with Stata with respect to testing pretty much anything; see notes for more information if you need to test response surfaces).

Lab topics: Estimating regression models in practice. We will use the following commands or command options (-{option}-):

- oneway
- anova
- regress
- hausman
- suest
- lincom
- test
- bootstrap
- margins
- -robust-

Week 4; Wednesday 11-3-2015

Topic: Two-stage equation models in Stata;

1. Two-stage least squares (instrumental variable) estimator
2. Tests for overidentifying restrictions; what the chi-square test means
3. Hausman test for endogeneity and augmented regression tests (Durbin–Wu–Hausman)
4. Tests of mediation (Sobel-Goodman Tests)
5. Bootstrapping


Suggested reading: Refer to one of the following, which is closest to your field:

Lab topics: We will estimate models using the following commands: ivregress, ivreg2, reg3, sem, sgmediation, test, nlcom, hausman, bootstrap

**Week 5: Wednesday 18-3-2015**

**Topic:** Advanced regression topics

1. Panel data:
   a. Fixed-effects models
   b. Random-effects model
2. Combining fixed- and random-effects (the “Mundlak” estimator)

**Required reading:**

**Suggested reading:**
1. Hofmann, D. A. (1997). An overview of the logic and rationale of hierarchical linear models. Journal of Management, 23(6), 723-744. (this article will give you an idea of how the terminology is used in management research; however, there are some important limitations in this article with respect to not discussing distinctions between fixed- and random-effects models and how to examine the assumptions of the estimators).

**Lab topics:** We will estimate models with Stata using xtreg, and regress and also use the commands lincom and margins -cluster(id)-, _n, expand, and sem

**Week 6: Wednesday 25-3-2015**

**Topic:**
1. Simultaneous equation models and seemingly unrelated models
   a. Multiple dependent variables
   b. Seemingly-unrelated regression/estimation
   c. Path models with three-stage least squares
   d. Path models with sem
   e. Simultaneity
   f. Cross-equation Wald tests and Chow tests
2. Mixed-process models (brief introduction)
3. Path and SEM models:
   a. ML estimation and assumptions
   b. SEM discrepancy function
   c. Calculating the chi-square manually for path (IV) models
   d. Likelihood ratio tests (for nested models)

**Required reading:**

Lab topics: We will estimate model using the following commands: sureg, cmp, reg3, sem, suest, test.

**Week 7; Wednesday 14-4-2015**

Topics: Confirmatory factor analysis and advanced topics
1. CFA models, basic and multifactor; calculating chi-square
2. Evaluating fit: fit statistics, residuals, modification indices (Lagrange tests)
3. SE model with latent variables
4. SE Mediation models
5. Likelihood ratio tests and Wald tests for parameter constraints
6. Higher-order factor models
7. A note on fit and a bit more on Monte Carlo
8. On local and global fit
9. Categorical data and -gsem-
10. Model implied instrumental variables and SEM with 2sls


Lab topics: We will estimate model using the following commands: sem (and various sem options). We will also use some of the basic matrix commands of Stata (determinants, trace, inverse)

**Week 8; Wednesday 15-4-2015**

Topic: Advanced path and SEM models in Stata with latent variables

1. SE Models with single-indicator latent variables (errors-in-variables)
2. Multisample models (same and different DVs) and tests of invariance
3. MIMIC models
4. Seemingly unrelated SE models (same and different DVs)
5. Growth curve models
6. Analyzing secondary data (using covariance) matrixes
7. Appendix: Basic capabilities of Mplus and examples


Lab topics: We will estimate model using the following commands: sem (and various sem options), ssd.

Week 9; Wednesday 22-4-2015
Topic: Monte Carlo simulations.


Lab topics: We will review code to generating data structures, including corr2data, and basic code to write programs.

Week 10; Wednesday 29-4-2015
Topic 1: Critique of 2 articles


Topic 2: You need to prepare a very brief overview of your Monte Carlo experiment. Please have it on a USB stick; you are required to have only 2 slides on the Monte Carlo, which you will present in front of the class. On the first slide discuss the rule of thumb; on the second slide, discuss which variables you will manipulate for the Monte Carlo and the basic setup of the Monte Carlo.

Week 11; Wednesday 6-5-2015
I and the course assistant will meet with each of you, privately, during official class time, to discuss the Monte Carlo project. We will set up a meeting schedule with you on Doodle, which we will communicate to you a couple of weeks before the meeting.

Week 12; Wednesday 13-5-2015*
Topic: Critique of 4 articles


*This lesson will be between 2-3 hours long, depending on amount of discussion we have. I will be available for final (pointed) questions regarding your Monte Carlo presentations if required. Else you can use the time to work on your Monte Carlos.

Week 13; Wednesday 20-5-2015
Monte Carlo project presentations
Week 14: Wednesday 27-5-2015
Monte Carlo project presentations

Week 15: Wednesday 10 June 2015 14h00-17h00.
Final exam

References:


SUGGESTED REFERENCE BOOKS FOR YOUR PERSONAL LIBRARIES
(PLEASE SERIOUSLY CONSIDER BUYING SOME OF THESE BOOKS)

Stata and regression-related books:
Acock, A. C. (2006). A gentle introduction to Stata. College Station, TX: Stata Press--gives an nice overview to Stata for those who have never used it (for basic use).


Cameron, A. C., & Trivedi, P. K. (2009). Microeconometrics Using Stata. College Station, TX: Stata Press. --an extremely useful general purpose reference guide for using Stata (for advanced use)

Long, J. S., & Freese, J. (2006). Regression models for categorical dependent variables using Stata (2nd ed.). College Station, TX: StataCorp LP. --an extremely useful reference guide for categorical dependent variables using Stata (for advanced use)

SEM and Mplus-related books:


General books on SEM
Bollen, K. A. (1989). Structural equations with latent variables. New York: John Wiley & Sons.--this book is essential, a classic, and will give you lots of information regarding SEM in general. It is quite advanced, so refer to this only for more detailed information on SEM issues.


Note: The following site has useful information on Mplus and Stata:
http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/seminars/

As regards Stata, the following are useful:
http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/stata/webbooks/reg/default.htm
http://www.stata.com/support/faqs/

Stata-related books can be obtained on-line from www.stata.com or locally from http://www.scientific-solutions.ch/.

Note: for those of you who need to brush up on regression, see:


Note: for those of you who need to brush up on experimental design, see: