

Examples of Evaluation of Governance Programs

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Outline

Two papers using randomization:

1. Women as policy makers
2. Pitfalls of Participatory Monitoring

Paper 1: Women as Policy Makers

Raghabendra Chattopadhyay and Esther Duflo,
“Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a
Randomized Policy Experiment in India”

Research Questions

- Main question: Do women leaders in local politics provide different public goods than male leaders?
- Do they respond more to the demands of women voters?
- Do female leaders increase political participation by women in their constituency?
- What role can political quotas play in female empowerment?

Naïve approach...

- Just compare outcomes in places with female and male political leaders
- Problems with this approach?
 - Places with women leaders might be very unusual
 - Women leaders in these places might be very unusual
- Selection and Omitted Variable Bias: Can't extend results from these places to other places

Chattopadhyay and Duflo's Solution

- Randomization to the rescue!
- Since mid-1990s, 1/3 of Village Council Head positions in India reserved for women
- Reserved VCs chosen *randomly*
 - Should be similar to “control” villages in other ways

Village Councils

- Village Council (Gram Panchayat) elected to represent about 5-15 villages (10,000 people)
- *Pradhan* - Head of VC full-time appointment, no veto power.
- VC responsible for administering local infrastructure (public building, roads, water) and indentifying targeted welfare recipients



Source: <http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?235755>



Source: <http://www.nowpublic.com/world/rural-indian-women-against-corruption>

Research Design

- *Non-randomly* selected two districts – Birbhum in West Bengal and Udaipur in Rajasthan
- Birbhum: Surveys in *all* VCs: N= 166 VCs
 - Interviewed Pradhan of VC
 - Selected 3 villages from VC area for interviews
 - “New or repaired infrastructure since last election 2 years ago?”

Research Design

- Udaipur: Chose 100 villages *randomly* from within area covered by a local NGO
 - Note different sampling strategy than in WB
 - No Pradhan interviews
 - Same questions on infrastructure

What do men/women want?

- Use official data on the formal complaints and requests brought by men and women to the Pradhan in each village.
- West Bengal:
 - Women: drinking water, roads, welfare programs.
 - Men: roads, irrigation and education
- Rajasthan:
 - Women: drinking water, welfare programs and roads.
 - Men: roads, education and drinking water

Results - Women Pradhans

- Women Pradhans
 - less educated
 - more likely to be Below Poverty Line
 - Less political experience
 - 43% say helped by spouse (v.s. 13% for men)
 - 17% are spouse of former Pradhan

Results - West Bengal

- Participation of women in village meetings:
Small increase (from 7% to 10%)
- Women in reserved village *twice* as likely to make a request or complain to the Pradhan.
- In reserved seats, investment in:
 - Drinking water, Roads ↑
 - Education ↓

Results - Rajasthan

- Participation of women : *No effect*
 - Note higher baseline participation
- Complaints by women: *No effect*
- In reserved seats, investment in:
 - Drinking water↑
 - Roads↓

More results

- Women do not appear to respond more to complaints from men or women *from their own village*.
 - Do not appear to be more “sensitive” than male politicians.
 - Choose drinking water more because it is what *they* care about more.

Conclusions

- Women Pradhans of VCs focus on providing different public goods than men.
- Provide more of the goods that women value more in the district
- Related to personal preferences of Pradhan rather than increased sensitivity towards other women?
- No systematic effect on female participation in village.

Internal Validity

- Within the sample, treatment (reservation) and control (non-reservation) are assigned randomly
 - No Selection or OVB within sample
 - Internally Valid

External Validity

- Only 2 districts
- Non-randomly selected
 - Maybe something different about Udaipur and Birbhum?
- Only tells us about women politicians when reservation exists in the system

Paper 2: Pitfalls of Participatory Programs

Abhijit Banerjee, Rukmini Banerji, Esther Duflo, Rachel Glennerster, and Stuti Khemani, “Pitfalls of Participatory Programs: Evidence From a Randomized Evaluation in Education in India”

Background

- Poor quality of education in rural India
 - High teacher absenteeism rates ~25%
 - Very poor learning outcomes
- Monitoring problem
 - Poor state capacity and incentives to monitor
 - Make schools accountable to parents / local governments?

Background - Village Education Committees

- Village Education Committees (VECs) formed in each village under SSA:
 - Three parents
 - Head Teacher of School
 - Pradhan of Village Government
- Intermediary between village and district education department

VECs in Theory

- Indirect Control
 - Monitoring performance
 - Reporting problems to district authorities
 - Requesting additional resources
- Direct Control
 - Hiring /Renewing Community-Based Teachers
 - Allocating additional resources from central govt.

→ Quite powerful (in theory)

VECs in Practice

- 2005 Study in Jaunpur district in Uttar Pradesh
 - Lack of knowledge about existence of VEC
 - VEC members unaware of own powers and responsibilities
 - 38% of children aged 7-14 could not recognize numbers, 60% could not read a story
 - Parents, teachers, VEC members overestimated children's learning.

Research Questions

- Does providing communities with information about rights and responsibilities increase participation in monitoring?
- Does building the capacity of the community to judge educational outcomes increase monitoring?
- Does training volunteers to teach children directly increase participation?
- Do any of these have an effect on school / student outcomes?

Three Interventions

- Intervention 1: Meetings + Information
- Intervention 2: Int 1+ Learning Report Cards
- Intervention 3: Int 1+ Int 2 + Training
Volunteers to Teach Reading Classes

Int1 & Int 2: Monitoring

Int3 : Direct Action

Randomization

- Intervention designed+implemented by NGO Pratham
- 4 blocks within district randomly selected
 - Villages randomly selected within blocks
 - Villages assigned to either Control group, or one of the 3 Treatment Groups (Int 1, Int 2, Int 3)
- Baseline Survey in 2005, Endline in 2006
- N=280 villages, 30 households per village, Approx 17,000 children tested!

Results - Community

- Knowledge of VEC members: Increases
- Knowledge of parents: No Effect
- Activity of VEC: No Effect!
- Participation of parents: No Effect!

Results - School

- Teacher absence: No effect
- Student absence: No effect
- Teacher hiring: No effect
- Student learning: No effect in Int 1 & Int 2

Results - Intervention 3

- 2-3 month reading classes taught by *volunteers* in most villages in Int 3
 - 8% of children attended
 - Mostly kids who did poorly in baseline
- For the students who *chose* to attend:
 - 22% more likely to be able to read letters / words
 - Very large effect

Conclusion

- Communities do care about children's education
→ Willing to volunteer for teaching camps
- But providing information about powers and responsibilities not enough to get people to participate
 - Some barrier to participation?

Internal Validity

- Villages randomly assigned to 3 treatment groups vs. control group
 - No OVB or Selection Bias
 - Internally Valid
- Note comparison is (Info) vs. (Info+Capacity) vs. (Info+Capacity+Direct) vs. (Control)

External Validity

- Usual problem: Only 1 district, may not be representative.

Overall Summary

- Think carefully about research question, design interventions accordingly
- Randomize treatment vs. control
- Leads to strong internal validity
- Usually concerns about external validity