

## ***ESD.83 Assignment 1: Observations, Data Sources and Data Reduction***

(no more than 1000 word paper, 10% of the total)

***Assigned: Session 1; Selected: Session 2; Due: Session 4.***

### ***Reading Material:***

A series of 15 articles has been selected and a listing of these articles is attached. For consistency, we have taken all of these from the NBER (National Bureau of Economic Research) Working Paper series. However, for variety, we require that each student pick a different article to analyze.

Few, if any, subjects are expected to correlate closely with your evolving interests as this is not the point of the assignment. The learning involves appreciation of how empirical observations are handled in a field of research that studies complex sociotechnical systems systematically and empirically.

### ***Assignment:***

1. After reading the assigned paper in depth (and possibly looking at a key reference or two);
2. write a short paper (**1000 words or less**) addressing as many of the following issues as seems appropriate for the paper you are analyzing:
  - a. What empirical observations are utilized in the paper?
  - b. Characterize these observations (for example, quantitative vs. qualitative, well-known vs. original, essential vs. relatively unimportant, time dependence –dynamic or static, etc.)
  - c. What is your assessment of the accuracy and reliability/validity of the observations?
  - d. Identify the methods used in the paper to analyze the observations and comment on your understanding of the appropriateness.
  - e. Was establishing the observational set important to the progress that is claimed in the paper?
  - f. Can the conclusions of the paper be supported by the observational set? How is correlation vs. causation addressed in the paper?
  - g. How does the observational set influence the generalizability of the conclusion? Does the paper seem to strike an appropriate balance between specificity and generalizability?

## ***Appendix A – List of Articles***

Fishback, P., Allen, S., Fox J., and Livingston, B. (2010). A Patchwork Safety Net: A Survey of Cliometric Studies of Income Maintenance Programs in the United States in the First Half of the Twentieth Century, National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc. NBER Working Paper No. 15696
Mitchener, K. and Wheelock, D. (2010). Does the Structure of Banking Markets Affect Economic Growth? Evidence from U.S. State Banking Markets, National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc. NBER Working Paper No. 15710.
Ruediger Bachmann, Steffen Elstner, and Eric R. Sims. Uncertainty and Economic Activity: Evidence from Business Survey Data, NBER Working Paper No. 16143
Randall Morck and Bernard Yeung, Economics, History, and Causation; NBER Working Paper No. 16678
Jonathan T. Kolstad and Amanda E. Kowalski, The Impact of Health Care Reform On Hospital and Preventive Care: Evidence from Massachusetts; NBER Working Paper No. 16012
Till Stowasser, Florian Heiss, Daniel McFadden, and Joachim Winter; "Healthy, Wealthy and Wise?" Revisited: An Analysis of the Causal Pathways from Socio-economic Status to Health; NBER Working Paper No. 17273
Amitabh Chandra and Jonathan S. Skinner; Technology Growth and Expenditure Growth in Health Care; NBER Working Paper No. 16953
Alan L. Gustman, Thomas L. Steinmeier, and Nahid Tabatabai; Financial Knowledge and Financial Literacy at the Household Level; NBER Working Paper No. 16500
Craig Doidge, G. Andrew Karolyi, and René M. Stulz; The U.S. Left Behind: The Rise of IPO Activity Around the World; NBER Working Paper No. 16916
Nico Voigtlaender and Hans-Joachim Voth; Persecution Perpetuated: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Semitic Violence in Nazi Germany; NBER Working Paper No. 17113
Jinhu Li, Jeremiah Hurley, Philip DeCicca, and Gioia Buckley; Physician Response to Pay-for-Performance: Evidence from a Natural Experiment; NBER Working Paper No. 16909
Henry S. Farber; Rational Choice and Voter Turnout: Evidence from Union Representation Elections; NBER Working Paper No. 16160
Eugene N. White; "To Establish a More Effective Supervision of Banking": How the Birth of the Fed Altered Bank Supervision; NBER Working Paper No. 16825
Daniel Treisman; The Geography of Fear ; NBER Working Paper No. 16838
Philip Babcock, Kelly Bedard, Gary Charness, John Hartman, and Heather Royer; Letting Down the Team? Evidence of Social Effects of Team Incentives; NBER Working Paper No. 16687

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