

Online Appendix: Field Experiments: Thinking Through Identity and Positionality

Additional Resources for Researchers

In this online appendix, we provide the following resources for individuals in thinking through issues of identity and positionality in field experimental research. Such materials may also be assigned in methods courses.

- A checklist of questions to ask oneself over the course of the research project
- 10 discussion questions for students
- A more extensive bibliography of resources regarding identity, positionality, and field experiments

Checklist of Questions on Identity and Positionality

Category	Questions
A. General	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are my self-assigned identities, and how might other actors (participants, donors, implementing partners (IPs), research assistants (RAs)) assign my identities given the research context?2. What are the identities of participants, donors, IPs, and RAs? How do they perceive each others' identities?3. What are the normative agendas of the donor, IPs, and RAs? In what ways do they align with (some of) my own normative agendas, with each other, and with potential participants and other local stakeholders? If they do not align, how will we reconcile this for research purposes?4. What might other actors' (participants, donors, IPs, RAs) perceptions of one another's identities imply for power dynamics (positionality) generally?
B. Developing Research Questions & Interventions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How might my identity and experiences affect my approach to developing research questions and interventions for this particular research context?2. What types of initial research steps can I take to discover whether research questions and interventions are feasible and important to potential study participants, donors, IPs, and other local stakeholders?3. Does positionality affect the willingness of some actors to be deferential to others' research/policy agendas, and how might I be able to address potential deference so as to elicit inclusion?4. How can I incorporate the ideas of the community I study

	<p>and/or local actors into the design of the project?</p> <p>5. Can I make sure, through initial research, that the intervention will not invite backlash and potential harm to participants?</p>
C. Implementation and Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How might the intervention’s implementation success, and outcomes, be affected by potential participants’ and other local stakeholders’ perception of the donor, IPs, RAs? 2. What are the implementing partners’ incentives/interests for the intervention implementation to succeed/fail and what are possible consequences on research outcomes and ethics? 3. Have I adequately considered the risks that research assistants (e.g., overworking, safety, or harassment) may face in conducting this research? How will I address these issues given my positionality within the research team? 4. Will I be physically present during implementation? How am I planning on identifying myself or correcting misperceptions? How might my physical presence affect implementation or outcomes?
D. Dissemination	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the realm of appropriate audiences for dissemination? How can I best include participant populations or other local stakeholders? 2. Will the results be disseminated in the same way to the same actors, regardless of the outcome, or only if results adhere to my or other actors’ (donor, IPs, RAs) normative agenda? 3. What are possible responses to my research, and can I anticipate how to deal with challenges to the research? 4. Are there ways for me to “give back” to the research team or respondent populations, especially if I work with vulnerable populations?
E. Anticipating Academic Reception	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can I include aspects of identity and positionality in my ethics statement in the research written materials? 2. How might other academics perceive my normative agenda or research robustness based on my identities/positionality? 3. If I perceive explicit or implicit biases based on my identity/positionality, what am I prepared to say or do?

Discussion Questions for Field Experiments Courses

1. What is researcher identity? What is researcher positionality?

2. Some might argue that research identity and positionality does not/should not affect experiments. In what ways might identity and positionality affect the implementation of field experiments?
3. How can identity or positionality in field experiments affect whether we interpret the research as objective?
4. Do you think that when a researcher is from the group that they study, it should affect the types of interventions the researcher evaluates?
5. Can you think of ways that your identity and positionality might change in different research contexts?
6. In what research contexts are you an insider versus outsider?
7. How might perceptions about your identity affect your positionality vis-à-vis others (i.e. donor, implementing partner, research participants)?
8. Are there some political science interventions that are appropriate in some contexts, but not others, due to the researchers' identity and positionality?
9. Consider a study that employs field experiments you read in-depth in class.
 - a. How were identity and positionality of actors involved in the study considered (or not) in the research?
 - b. How might identity or positionality have affected the implementation of the study and/or the outcomes?
10. Should field experimentalists add a discussion of their identity and positionality (and how it might have affected the research) to research papers and presentations? What are the potential benefits and downsides of doing so?

Extended Bibliography of Identity and Positionality Considerations

The following works include discussions of identity and positionality that may be useful for field experimenters regarding various research activities and stages.

Abbarno, Aaron J., and Nicole Bonoff. 2018. "Applied Political Science and Evidence-Based Foreign Assistance in Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance." *PS, Political Science & Politics* 51.3: 559-562.

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Krause, Peter. (2020). "Navigating Born and Chosen Identities in Fieldwork." in Krause, Peter, and Ora Szekely, eds. *Stories from the Field: A Guide to Navigating Fieldwork in Political Science*. Columbia University Press.

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Research 4 Impact briefings on building successful researcher-practitioner relationships:
<https://www.r4impact.org/our-findings>

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