219B – Problem Set 3b – Due in class on April 22, 2009
Lab and Field Experiments

Question #1. Lab and Field Experiments

This question builds on the Levitt-List (JEP, 2007) paper on the relationship between laboratory evidence and field evidence. This problem set is more open-ended than the previous ones and is mostly meant to stimulate research ideas.

a) Pick your favorite laboratory experiment. Describe then what would be the closest equivalent field experiment. Assume that you can have all data that you need and all funds to run experiments that you can imagine. What are advantages and disadvantages of the two types of evidence in this case?

b) Pick again a laboratory experiment (the same or another one). Describe then what would be the closest equivalent natural experiment. Again, assume all data that you may need. What are advantages and disadvantages of the two types of evidence in this case?

c) Pick now a field experiment or a natural experiment and describe the closest laboratory experiment. Can the laboratory experiment separate explanations that the field evidence cannot?

d) Describe two of the criticisms that Levitt-List make to laboratory experiments, and apply them to one or more of the examples above. Do you find them applicable?

e) Levitt and List imply that in the field we are less likely to observe non-standard behavior. Discuss at least two reasons why the opposite may hold – biases may matter more in the field than in the laboratory. Try to provide also concrete examples in terms of applications or theory examples.