NATURAL FIELD EXPERIMENTS PUBLISHED IN 2025 ON FIELDEXPERIMENTS.COM

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In 2019, I put together a summary of data from my field experiments website that pertained to natural field experiments (Harrison and List, 2004). Several people have asked me for updates. In this document I update all figures and numbers to show the details for 2025. I also include the description from the original paper below.

Back in January of this year I provided summary data on all field experiments that were published on a website that I started nearly 20 years ago. I subsequently wrote one of these notes to provide data for artefactual field experiments titled "A Summary of Artefactual Field Experiments on Fieldexperiments.com: The Who's, What's, Where's, and When's". Due to several email requests, I have now put together a summary of natural field experiments on the site.

This note summarizes that information—for natural field experiments published on the bibliographical site http://www.fieldexperiments.com. In my own work I have reserved the term "field experiment" for those cases where I observed subjects in their naturally occurring environments (see, e,g., Czibor et al. (2019); List (2002, 2004, 2006, 2026). I explicitly, therefore, discriminated between explorations in this environment and laboratory studies that used non-standard subject pools (see, e.g., Andersen et al. (2018) or Cappelen et al. (2022)). In a JEL paper (Harrison and List, 2004), such important differences are accounted for via qualifiers.

I followed this nomenclature on the site by placing studies into three groups: 1. Artefactual field experiments, which are the same as conventional lab experiments but with a non-standard subject pool (i.e., non-students). Running Peruvian borrowers through lab games (Karlan, 2005 AER) would be an example of an artefactual field experiment. 2. Framed field experiments, which are identical to artefactual field experiments but with field context in either the commodity, task, or information set that the subjects use. An example would be work that elicits valuations for public goods that occur naturally in the environment of the subjects (see some of Peter Bohm's excellent work, List and Shogren, 1998; List et al., 1998, and List and Lucking-Reiley, 2000). 3. Natural field experiments, which are identical to framed field experiments except that the subjects do not know that they are participants in an experiment. An example could be

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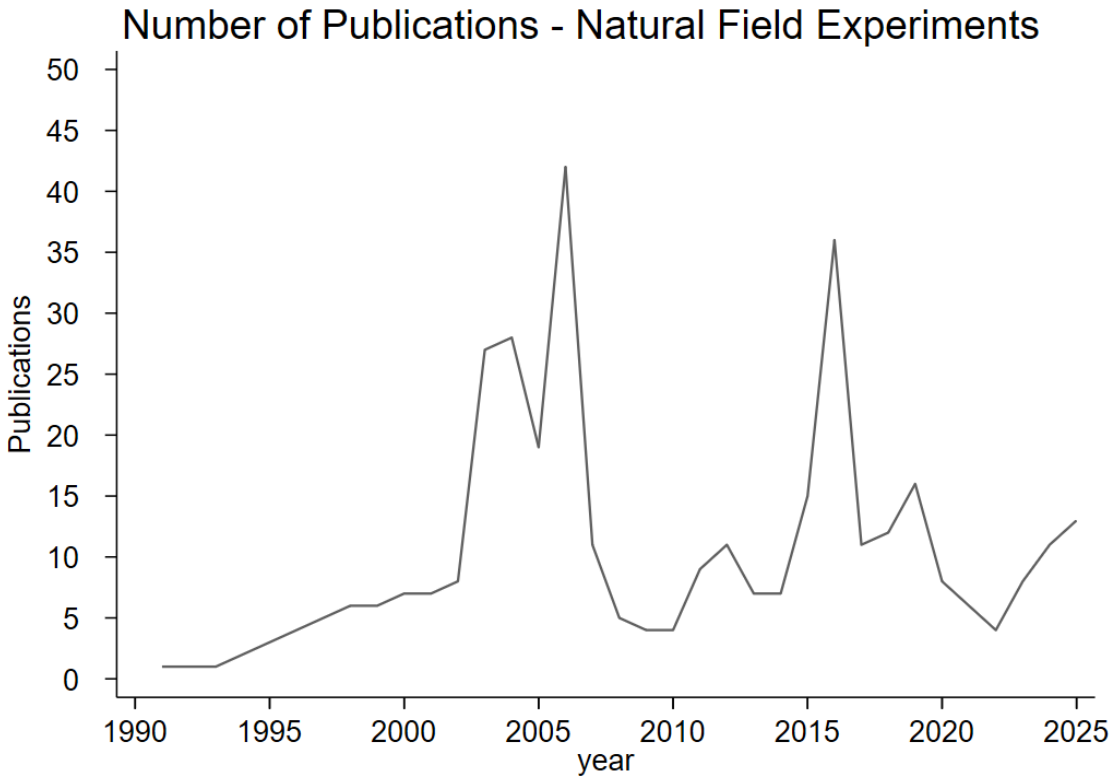
found among the recent surge in fundraising experiments (see, e.g., List and Lucking-Reiley, 2002, Karlan and List, 2007, Landry et al., 2006,2007).

Of course, not all studies will fit neatly into one of these three categories. I hope, however, that the categories provide a useful way to think about the factors outside of a traditional laboratory experiment that are potentially important.

Over the years, I have increasingly received questions about which papers are included on the site and their impact. Instead of sending out several emails per week answering such questions, in January I decided to put together a brief account of the studies and their impact. I focused on all field experimental studies and after making public that working paper I received several emails asking me to break down the areas even further in separate notes. This note describes one such breakdown of natural field experiments (NFE). I use RePEc's data to provide a few (incomplete) glimpses of NFE's impact.

Figure 1 summarizes all of the natural field experimental (NFE) papers published from 1990 to 2025 on my website (see, e.g., Al-Ubaydli et al., 2015; 2017; 2019; 2020; 2021, 2022; List, 2024). The growth that one would expect is evident, but the heterogeneity from year to year was unexpected. This gives an indication that I am only partly capturing this market on my website, and one should be cautious when interpreting much from these data.

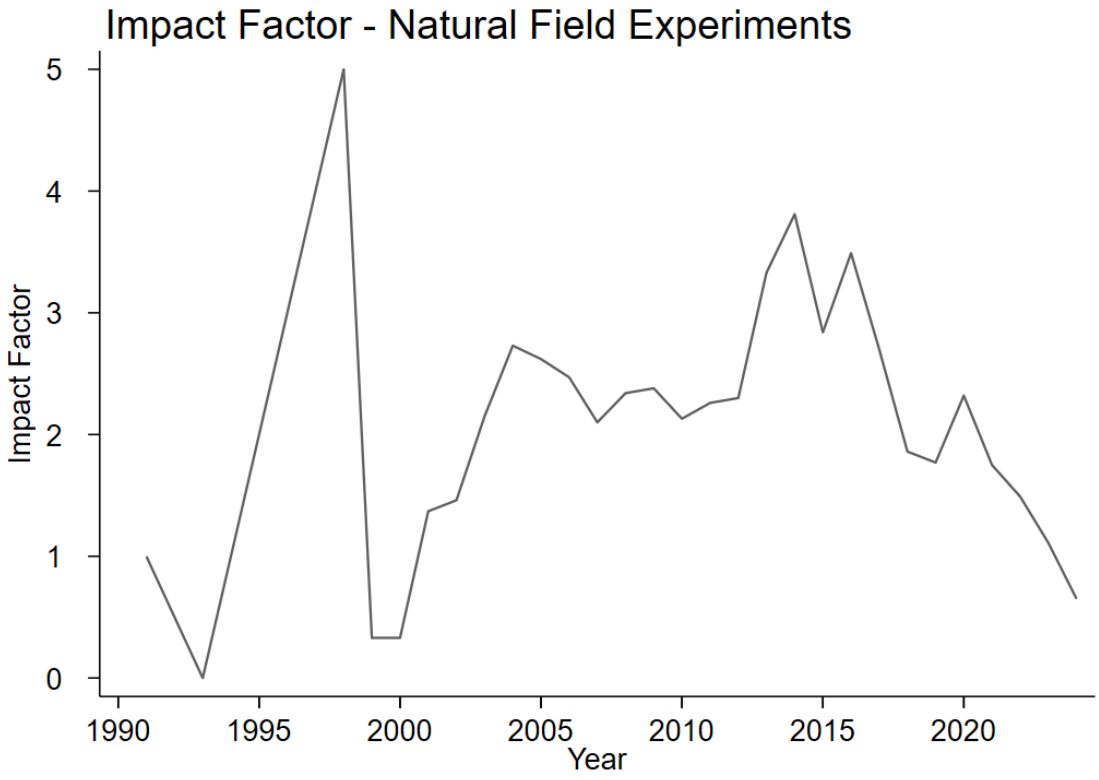
Figure 1: Time-Series of NFE papers published annually on fieldexperiments.com



Next, I provide a rough glimpse of the NFE impact. In Figure 2, I provide a time-series of RePEc's impact factor scores from 1990-2025. The impact factor is computed as the number of citations in to articles published in y-1 until y-5 divided number of articles published in y-1 until y-5 in the series. Observations are annual. An interesting trend

here is that the impact factor of NFEs increases strongly after year 2000. This is a good sign for the field experimental market for this type of approach. Indeed, of the 3 field experimental types, NFEs enjoy the largest impact factors.

Figure 2: Time-Series of RePEc's impact factor for NFE's, which is the number of citations in to articles published in y-1 until y-5 divided number of articles published in y-1 until y-5 in series. Observations are annual for all NFEs on fieldexperiments.com



To complement the impact factor summary, I create two "usage" summaries in Figures 3 and 4. Here, I provide a time-Series of the number of abstract views and downloads taken from RePEc. Observations are yearly for all NFEs on fieldexperiments.com. Here the data for abstract views are showing an increase over time with upward blips from in 2019 to 2025. These are two particular studies that gained a lot of attention.

Figure 3. Time-series of the number of abstract views from RePEc. Observations are annual for all NFEs on fieldexperiments.com.

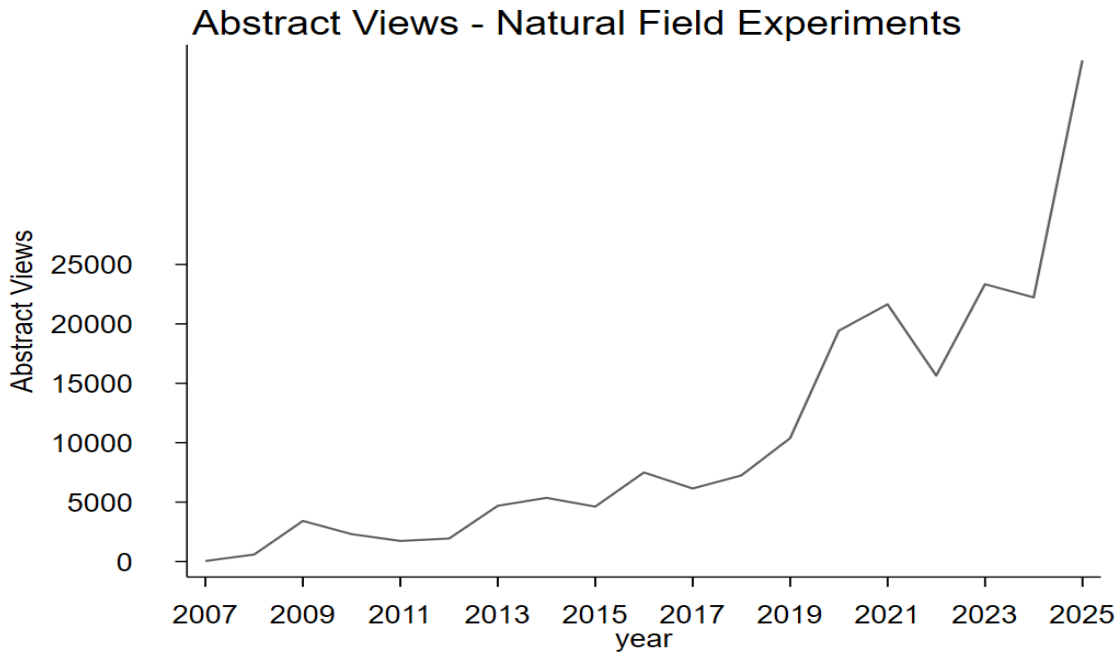
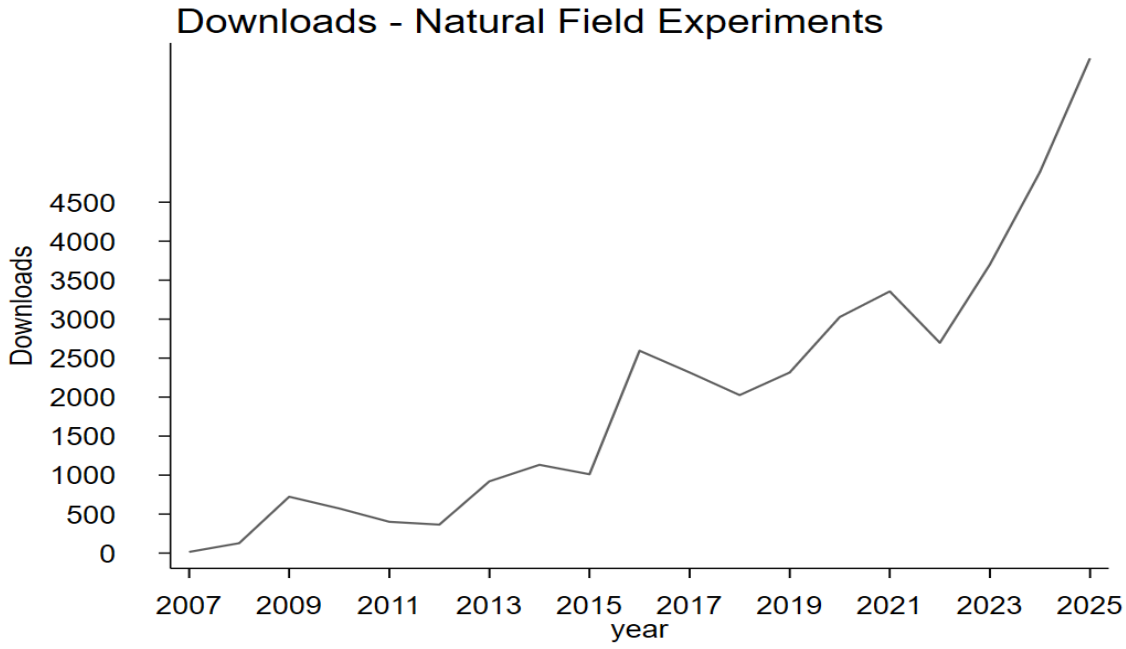


Figure 4: Time-series of downloads from RePEc. Observations are annual for all NFEs on fieldexperiments.com.



In Figure 5, I present the annual number of unique authors of NFEs. In Figure 6, I provide information on the cumulative number of unique authors of NFE papers. From the graphs, we can see that the growth of the number of authors entering the field, that started in the early 2000s, has not come to a stop yet. Both figures highlight the breadth

of NFEs in the experimental literature, with around 495 different authors now having published an NFE on the site. This number is much larger than comparable authors who have published AFEs and FFEs on the website. This bodes well for the NFE approach.

Finally, in the references section I provide a sampling of the papers that have been posted on fieldexperiments.com to answer the query which papers are published on the site (see, e.g., Alevy et al, 2007; 2011, 2017; List, 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2020,2021,2022, 2024, 2026; Al-Ubaydli and List, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019).

In closing, thanks for using the site and if you should have any comments or questions please let me know.

Figure 5: Time-series of the unique number of authors of NFEs. Observations are annual for all NFEs on fieldexperiments.com

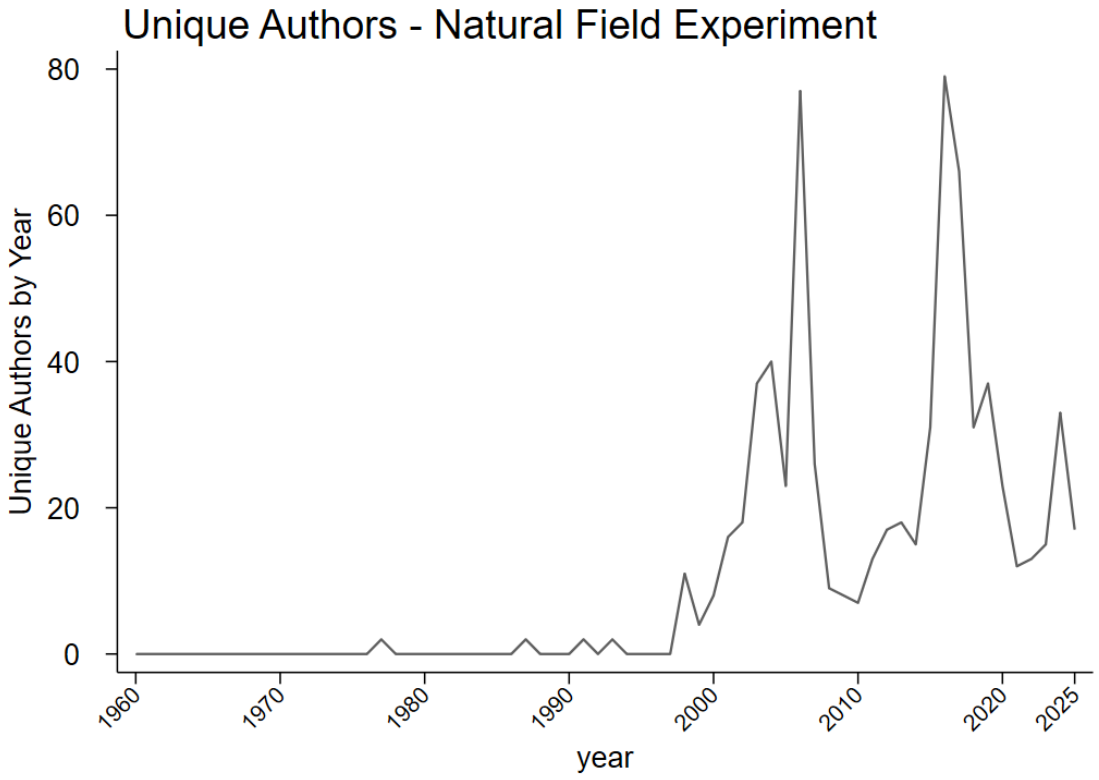
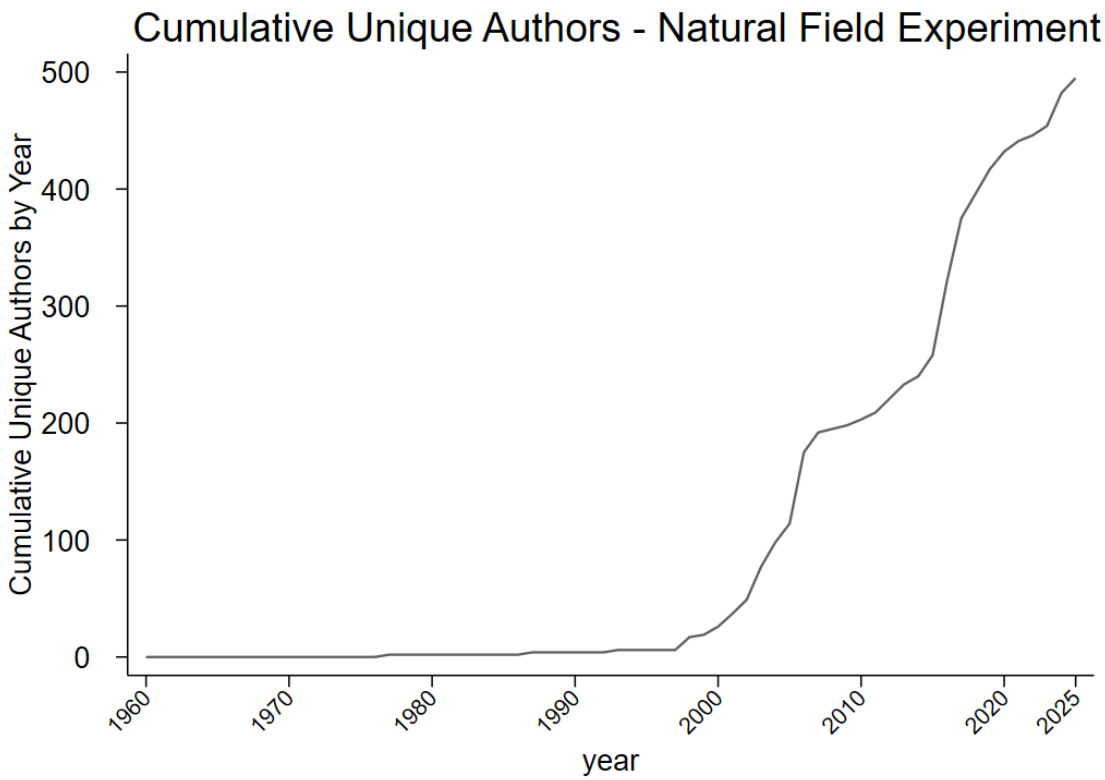


Figure 6: Time-Series of the cumulative number of unique authors for field experimental papers published for NFEs. Observations are annual for all NFEs on fieldexperiments.com.


Cumulative Unique Authors - Natural Field Experiment
Cumulative Unique Authors by Year
500
400
300
200
100
0
1960
1970
1980
1990
2000
2010
2020
2025
year

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