

Benjamin T. Blemings

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Department of Economics
West Virginia University
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Education

West Virginia University

Ph.D., *Economics*

Expected Graduation: May 2021

Miami University (OH)

B.S., *Quantitative Economics*, Economics Junior Scholar

2011 - 2015

Thesis: How Alcohol Sales Affect Crime at College Football Games

Adviser: Dr. William Even, Ph.D.

Research Areas

Interests: Economics of Education, Human Capital, Causal Inference

Fields: Public, Health, Regional/Urban

Teaching Interests

Areas: Principles of Economics, Microeconomics Fields, Statistics, Econometrics

Fellowships, Honors, Awards

Research Assistantship, *Center for Free Enterprise* 2016 -

Teaching Assistantship, *West Virginia University- Business and Economics* 2015 -

Departmental Honors in Economics, *Miami University* 2015

Undergraduate Summer Scholarship (USS), *Miami University* 2015

Teaching

Intermediate Microeconomic Theory, *Principle Instructor* 2020

Survey of Economics, *Principle Instructor* 2019

Principles of Microeconomics, *Principle Instructor* 2018-2020

Advanced Graduate Microeconomic Theory I, *Teaching Assistant* 2017

Introductory Statistics, *Teaching Assistant* 2017

Principles of Microeconomics, *Teaching Assistant* 2016, 2018

Working Papers

“No Birthdate Retakes: Evidence on College Merit-Based Aid and Goals From Multiple Eligibility Discontinuities” (JMP) [Link](#)

Abstract: Merit-based financial aid for college costs states billions and affect millions of students. Some studies of merit-aid on education assume either 1) students do not manipulate academic eligibility scores into receiving treatment, despite known cutoffs and large incentives to manipulate or 2) pre merit-aid cohorts are similar to post merit-aid cohorts. This paper uses small differences in birthdate and compulsory school entry laws to weaken

and test assumptions necessary for causal inference and re-evaluate the effect of merit-aid on academic outcomes. This design is internally valid. The effect of aid on credits and GPA are not as different as previously estimated. Different effects by gender are found.

“Alcohol Sales to College Football General Seating Reduces Crime: Evidence from NIBRS, Sales Legalizations, and the Minimum Legal Drinking Age”

Under review at Journal of Health Economics [Link](#)

Abstract: Alcohol sales to general seating at college football games has been broadly adopted despite results suggesting greater alcohol availability increases crime and college alcohol abuse. Crime reductions are found after sales are allowed. To address omitted variables, age-based variation in post-sales, stadium alcohol availability is employed, finding legally aged individuals are less likely to commit crimes and be victims after sales are allowed. Evidence shows age variation controls for time-varying differences in clearance rates. Results suggest substitution effects matter for the relationship between alcohol access and criminal behavior, identifying a new empirical nuance to be heeded for policy.

“Unintentional Effects of International Aid on Violence: Evidence from Somali Piracy & Ocean Wind Speeds” (with Greg Deangelo) [Link](#)

Submitted to Journal of Political Economy

Abstract: Conflict harms institutions by increasing the cost of transactions and muddling investment incentives, yet institutions are crucial for economic growth. Maritime piracy presents one of the most prominent forms of violence in countries (e.g. Somalia) that face struggling institutions. To reduce the impact of piracy (particularly on global commerce), warships have been deployed to waters surrounding Somalia. A potential unintended consequence of piracy deterrence efforts is that they make nefarious land activities more attractive, threatening institutional development and safety. This paper examines how efforts to displace violent actors on the waterways impacts land conflict. To overcome endogeneity concerns we exploit variation from ocean wind speeds, which reduce piracy for reasons unassociated with dysfunctional institutions and foreign assistance, using an instrumental variables approach. We find one fewer pirate attack (1 st. dev. decrease) leads to approximately 18% more land violence and an additional 9.11 land conflict deaths, suggesting that naval patrols harm Somali institutions and safety. Our empirical results imply that the \$5,537,390 savings to shipping companies comes at the cost of 9.11 Somali land fatalities.

“Disamenity or a Signal of Competence? The Empirical Political Economy of Local Road Maintenance” (with Margaret Bock) [Link](#)

Submitted to

“Hoggin the Road: Pork Slaughterhouses Increase Truck Traffic, Reducing Road Quality” (with Margaret Bock and Alexandre Scarcioffolo)

Works in Progress

“Returns to Workplace Utilization: Evidence From High School Recruiting and Barely Starting in the NBA” (with Alex Cardazzi)

Conference Presentations

Eastern Economics Association, 2020

Public Choice, 2019

Eastern Economics Association, 2019

Applied Economics in Regional and Urban Science, 2018

Economics of Corruption, 2017

Boston, MA

Louisville, KY

New York City, NY

Morgantown, WV

Passau, Germany

Referee

Contemporary Economic Policy (X2), Journal of Entrepreneurship and Public Policy, International Journal of Sports Finance

Book Chapters

“Economics of the NFL” in *Handbook of Sports Economics*, Downward, P., Frick, B., Humphreys, B. Pawlowski, T., Ruseski J., and Soebbing B. eds., Sage Publications, in press.

Workshops

WVU Football Professors’ Day 2019, *Invited Guest*

2019

CFE Empirical Workshop, *Attendee*

2017, 2018

Other Experience

WVU Hearts of Gold Service Animals, *Certified Dog Handler*

2016 -

Phantom Fireworks, *Seasonal Tent Operator*

2016 - 2019

NWN Corporation, *Data Science Intern*

September 2017

WVU Office of Student Accounts and Financial Aid, *Data Consultant*

2015 - 2016

Membership

American Economic Association

References

Adam Nowak, Ph.D. (Advisor)

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Bryan McCannon, Ph.D.

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