

MARGARITA PETRUSEVICH

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University of Texas at Austin
Department of Economics
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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Candidate, Economics, University of Texas at Austin, May 2025 (Expected)

Dissertation Title: *"Essays on Energy, Environmental Policies and Public Health"*

M.S., Economics, University of Texas at Austin, 2021

BSc., Economics, University of London (under academic direction of London School of Economics), 2019

BSc., Economics, National Research University Higher School of Economics (NRU HSE), 2019

REFERENCES

Manuela Angelucci (Chair)
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LBJ School of Public Affairs
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Sheila M. Olmstead
Cornell Brooks School of Public Policy
Cornell University
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TEACHING AND RESEARCH FIELDS

Fields: Applied Microeconomics

Sub-Fields: Development, Energy, Environment, and Health Economics

HONORS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

2019 – 2024	Departmental Fellowship, UT Austin
2023	Professional Development Award, UT Austin
2022	Student Case Competition Award, US Association for Energy Economics
2022	Professional Development Award, UT Austin
2022	Graduate Continuing Bruton Fellowship, UT Austin
2021	Best Second Year Paper Award, UT Austin
2016-2019	Merit-based scholarship covering 75% of tuition fees, NRU HSE

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT

2024	University of Texas at Austin, LBJ School of Public Policy, Research Assistant for Mary F. Evans and Sheila M. Olmstead
Fall, 2023	University of Texas at Austin, LBJ School of Public Policy, Research Assistant for Andrew R. Waxman
Summer, 2023	IMF, Statistics Department, DS Division, PhD Intern
2021 – 2023	University of Texas at Austin, Department of Economics, Research Assistant for Leigh L. Linden
2021 – 2023	University of Texas at Austin, Dell Medical School, Factor Health, Research Assistant
2017 – 2018	National Research University Higher School of Economics, Department of Economics, Research Assistant for Roman Zakharenko
Summer, 2016	Alinga Consulting Group, Accounting Intern

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Summer 2021, Fall 2020, Fall 2019	Economic Statistics, University of Texas at Austin, Teaching Assistant for Professors Daniel Slesnick and Valerie Bencivenga
Spring 2021, Spring 2020	Introduction to Macroeconomics, University of Texas at Austin, Teaching Assistant for Professor Shalah Mostashari
Summer 2020	Introduction to Microeconomics, University of Texas at Austin, Teaching Assistant
Spring, 2019	Introduction to Macroeconomics, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Teaching Assistant for Professor Tatiana Matveeva

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Conferences:

October, 2024	Social Cost of Water Pollution Conference, Washington, DC, “A retrospective analysis of the benefits and costs of the Safe Drinking Water Act’s (SDWA) Arsenic Rule” with Wes Austin, Mary F. Evans, Lala Ma, Sheila M. Olmstead, Nathalie Simon, and Jiameng Zheng
June, 2024	Western Economics Association Conference (WEA), Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (AERE), Seattle, WA, “Powering Progress: Assessing the Impacts of Solar Mini-Grids on Energy Access and Human Capital Accumulation in India” (<i>Job Market Paper</i>)
April, 2024	University of Texas Development Economics Workshop, LBJ School of Public Affairs, Austin, TX, Poster Session, <i>Job Market Paper</i>
November, 2023	Southern Economics Association Conference (SEA), New Orleans, LA, <i>Job Market Paper</i>
September, 2023	University of Texas Environmental & Energy Economics Workshop, LBJ School of Public Affairs, Austin, TX, <i>Job Market Paper</i>
April, 2023	Texas Applied Microeconomics Student Workshop, Austin, TX, <i>Job Market Paper</i>
March, 2023	STATA Texas Empirical Microeconomics Conference, Austin, TX, Poster Session, <i>Job Market Paper</i>
February, 2023	University of Texas, Policy Research Workshop, LBJ School of Public Affairs, Austin, TX, <i>Job Market Paper</i>

November, 2022 United States Association for Energy Economics (USAEE), Student Case Competition, Houston, TX
August, 2022 Sloan/Haas Summer School in Environmental and Energy Economics at UC Berkeley, CA

Referee: *Journal of Health Economics*

WORKING PAPERS

Dissertation Chapters

“Powering Progress: Assessing the Impacts of Solar Mini-Grids on Energy Access and Human Capital Accumulation in India.” (*Job Market Paper*)

Emerging green technologies, such as solar mini-grids, are changing the global electrification frontier, providing access to electricity for remote rural communities. This work aims to examine the short- and medium-term effects of mini-grid-driven electrification on energy access and the accumulation of human capital in rural India. To identify the causal impact of the mini-grid installations, I exploit the staggered rollout of solar mini-grids across villages from 2014-2022. Utilizing remote imagery data in combination with conventional survey data and a difference-in-differences approach, I find that the installation of mini-grids results in a measurable 21% improvement in energy access (as measured by night-time brightness). The effects are driven primarily by medium and large-scale mini-grid installations. This translates into improved educational outcomes for children in affected communities, with the most pronounced effects observed in high school children. This paper shows that the key channel of these effects is enhanced energy access within households rather than schools.

“The Effects of Alcohol Sale Bans on Children: The Case of Russia.” (*Accepted, Journal of Health Economics*)

Alcohol control policies are implemented to reduce alcoholism and related harms around the globe. This work examines the effects of a policy that restricted when alcohol could be purchased on child outcomes in Russia. To identify causal impacts, I exploit variation in the timing and severity of the restriction, which was implemented in Russian states between 2005 and 2010. Utilizing household survey data and a difference-in-differences estimation approach, I find that the policy has improved children's physical health, with younger children being more affected, and additionally has decreased a variety of risky behavior indicators. Potential mechanisms for these effects include alcohol consumption, parental employment, household income, family stability, and time use. This work demonstrates that policies controlling parental substance access can have important effects on child health.

“A retrospective analysis of the benefits and costs of the Safe Drinking Water Act’s (SDWA) Arsenic Rule” with Wes Austin, Mary F. Evans, Lala Ma, Sheila M. Olmstead, Nathalie Simon, and Jiameng Zheng

We examine the ex post benefits, costs and distributional impacts of the Safe Drinking Water Act’s (SDWA’s) 2001 Arsenic Rule, which lowered the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for arsenic (As) from 50 to 10 micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/l}$), with compliance required for all systems by 2006. EPA’s ex ante regulatory impact analysis (RIA) suggested that the Rule’s monetized benefits did not exceed its costs, which, along with political timing, made it the subject of public controversy. We revisit the Rule’s impacts on As concentrations using data from EPA’s Six-Year Review of Drinking Water Standards, specifically SDWA compliance samples from 1980 to 2011. In contrast to the violations data typically used in the literature, compliance samples capture spatial and intertemporal variation in the actual contaminant levels in public drinking water systems. We update the estimated benefits of the Rule using new information on likely health endpoints, including those not explored in the original RIA. For the Rule’s retrospective cost estimates, we extrapolate cost estimates from recent demonstration projects in Morgan & Simon (2014) to all public water systems. Finally, we consider how costs and benefits of the new standard may have differentially accrued to small community water systems, as well as water systems primarily serving low-income and marginalized populations.

Work in Progress

“Toxic Pollution in Age of Climate Change: Investigating the Impacts of Natural Disasters on Industrial Emissions in Texas” with Yoojin Cha (*Part of Texas ERC Project # UTA 192*)

“Exploring Nightlights and NO₂ for economic activity nowcasting” (*IMF project*)

SERVICE

Economics Undergraduate Fellowship Research Mentor, University of Texas at Austin:

- Elizabeth M. Du (Placement: University of Chicago Pre-Doc)
- Liyan Deng
- Aditya V. Dronamraju
- Aliyah Banerjee

TECHNICAL SKILLS AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

Skills: Python, Remote Sensing (GEE), R, STATA, LaTeX, MATLAB, SQL, EViews, VBA, Maple

Work Eligibility: Eligible to work in the U.S. with no restrictions (no visa sponsorship required)