

MONICA GILLIS

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EDUCATION

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Ph.D. in Economics	<i>expected May 2022</i>
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign M.S. in Economics	<i>August 2016</i>
St. Mary's College of Maryland B.A. in Economics & Mathematics, <i>cum laude</i>	<i>May 2013</i>

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Development, Environmental, Public

RESEARCH

“Sea, Sand, and Storms: Tourism and Coastal Resiliency in Mexico”
(Job Market Paper)

“Wind or Rain: Which Disrupts the Labor Force More?”

“The Impact of a Government-Funded Cash Incentive Program on Latrine Use in India”

RESEARCH & TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant to Adam Osman	<i>Spring 2018 - Spring 2019</i>
Head Teaching Assistant, Principles of Microeconomics	<i>Fall 2017 - Fall 2019</i>
Teaching Assistant, Principles of Microeconomics	<i>Fall 2015 - Spring 2017</i> <i>Winter 2018, Fall 2020 - Fall 2021</i>
Teaching Assistant, Intermediate Microeconomics	<i>Summer 2017</i>

HONORS & AWARDS

Presidential Management Fellows Program 2022 Finalist	<i>December 2021</i>
Summer Research Fellowship	<i>Summer 2016 & 2020</i>
Teachers ranked as Excellent [†]	<i>Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, Spring 2017</i>
Department Fellowship, University of Illinois	<i>Fall 2014, Spring 2015</i>

[†] *Teaching effectiveness rated at least 4.5/5*

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Stata, ArcGIS, Python, MS Office, L^AT_EX

OTHER

Citizenship: USA

Sea, Sand, and Storms: Tourism and Coastal Resiliency in Mexico

Hurricanes cause extensive coastal damage, yet development and population growth in coastal areas remains disproportionately high, in part due to growth in tourism. Using a difference-in-differences methodology and accounting for location characteristics, I estimate the impact of hurricanes on economic activity through changes in nighttime lights. In tourism-intensive coastal areas, hurricanes cause a persistent (5-year) reduction in economic activity (as seen in a 7 percent drop in lights); in other coastal areas, hurricanes cause a similar reduction, but only for a single year. Results indicate that tourism intensity slows recovery, possibly due to associated declines in tourism consumption and substitutions to other touristic destinations.

The Impact of a Government-Funded Cash Incentive Program on Latrine Use in India

India has the highest open defecation rate of any country in the world. In 2012, the open defecation rate in India was 48.3%, while the rate for all of sub-Saharan Africa was 24.9% (Coey et al., 2014). The Government of India has been implementing sanitation campaigns since 1986 to encourage the construction and sustained use of low-cost latrines, especially in rural areas. This paper assesses the impact of a Government-sponsored program, running from 2005-2011, which gave financial awards to villages for becoming 100% open defecation free (ODF). The prize money was significant and the prize was not competitive, but still only a small fraction of villages in India won the prize. Further, a few years after winning, most villages reverted back to open defecation. This paper looks at the impact of this prize on toilet use in the short run using a panel dataset with data from 2004 and 2012. Using a propensity-score matching regression, I find statistically significant positive impacts of this government program on toilet use in the short run. Winning the award led to a 12.5 percentage point increase in the likelihood of using toilets in 2012 when comparing across all villages in India, a 5.1 percentage point increase when containing the regression within winning states, and a 9.5 percentage point increase when extending the end-line to 2016.