

Christina Sun

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Education

University of California, Davis

Ph.D. in Economics, Expected 2025

Binghamton University, State University of New York (SUNY)

B.S. in Economic Analysis and B.A. in Mathematical Sciences, 2018

Research

Fields of Interest

Behavioral Economics, Experimental Economics, Economics of Education

Work in Progress

Self Justification and Belief Distortion

In this project, I experimentally study whether people engage in belief distortion in order to justify their prior choices. Since our choices are a function of our beliefs and preferences, existing experimental paradigms cannot separate between the effect of choices vs. prior beliefs on posterior beliefs. I design a lab experiment that cleanly separates the influence of choices on posterior beliefs from that of priors, with additional treatments to disentangle underlying mechanisms of ownership effect and ego-relevant bias.

Behavioral Incentive Compatibility of BDM Belief Elicitation

Recent evidence has shown that revealing incentives during belief elicitation might negatively impact truth telling, even if the elicitation mechanism is theoretically incentive compatible. In this project, I study the effect of quantitative incentive information on truth telling in the Becker-DeGroot-Marschak (BDM) belief elicitation mechanism. Subjects guess the probability of selecting a red urn out of 10 urns of colors red and blue, where the number of urns of each color is known. Results show that in the treatment where subjects are shown full quantitative incentives, the rate of false reports is around 10 percentage points higher than in the treatment where no quantitative incentives are shown. This higher rate of false reports is driven by subjects who misunderstood the incentives. Given that BDM belief elicitation is particularly difficult to explain and implement, this result shows a potentially simpler and more practical way of eliciting beliefs while maintaining quality of data.

The Impact of School Quality on Postsecondary Success: Evidence in the Era of Common Core, with Scott Carrell, Michal Kurlaendar, Paco Martorell, and Matthew Naven

This paper explores high school quality in California after the transition to Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Using a longitudinal panel of students' standardized test scores, we estimate high school test score value added in English and mathematics for the 2015-2018 cohorts of 11th grade students. We then link these student-level data to college enrollment records to estimate college enrollment value added. We decompose the college enrollment value added into two components: the persistence of test score value added and non-test score factors (e.g., college counseling services) that influence college enrollment. Results show that there is substantial variation in school quality as measured by both test scores and college enrollment. A

one-standard deviation increase in school quality is associated with a 0.15 standard deviation increase in standardized test scores and an 8-percentage point increase college enrollment. Importantly, our results show that both the persistence in test score value added and other non-test score factors within a school are important determinants of college-going value added.

Diversity in Schools: Immigrants and the Long-Run Outcomes of US-Born Students, with Briana Ballis and Derek Rury

The peer composition of a school is an important feature of a child's learning environment. Recent work has shown that exposure to students who are immigrants or the children of immigrants has positive effects on the educational outcomes of their classmates (Figlio, et al., 2021). We plan to expand on this research by studying how the presence of immigrant children in Texas schools has influenced the success of their peers in school and into adulthood. Specifically, we will look at how immigrant students influence the academic performance, labor market earnings and the political participation of their US-born born peers.

Experience

Instructor

ECN 1A: Principles of Microeconomics Summer 2022 & Summer 2023

Teaching Assistant

ECN 190A: Behavioral Economics	Spring 2023
ECN 151A: Economics of Labor Markets	Summer 2020
ECN 1A: Principles of Microeconomics	Spring 2020
ECN 135: Money and Banking	Winter 2020
ECN 117: Economics of International Immigration	Fall 2019

Graduate Student Researcher

California Education Lab Summer 2020 - Present

Activity

Presentations

ESA North American Conference	October 2023
Bay Area Behavioral and Experimental Economics Workshop	May 2023
ESA North American Conference	November 2022
UC Davis Theory & Behavioral Lunchtime Seminar	March and November 2022
UC Davis Theory & Behavioral Lunchtime Seminar	February and November 2021

Referee

Journal of Human Resources 2020

Seminars and Workshops

Seminar on College Teaching, University of California, Davis	2023
Discrimination & Diversity Workshop, University of East Anglia	2022

Service

Organizer of Theory & Behavioral Lunchtime Seminar Series	2020
Executive Vice President of Economics Graduate Student Association	2020 - 2021

Awards and Fellowships

Russell Sage Foundation Research Grant: Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration Program	2023
UC Davis Economics Department Graduate Student Research Award	2023
UC Davis Economics Department Graduate Student Research Award	2022
UC Davis Economics Department Graduate Student Research Award	2021
UC Davis Economics Departmental Fellowship	2018-2019
State University of New York Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence	2018
Binghamton University President's Award for Student Excellence	2018
Binghamton University Economics Faculty Award for Excellence in Economics	2018
Binghamton University Award for Excellence in Mathematics	2018
Binghamton University Senior Class of 1986 Award for Student Excellence	2018

References

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