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Clint Harris

Contact Information

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Academic Positions

Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of Wisconsin-Madison 2019-Present

Education

Ph.D., Economics, Purdue University, Krannert School of Management	2019
Committee Chair: Victoria Prowse	
M.S., Economics, Purdue University	2016
B.A., Economics, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis	2014
B.A., Marketing, Taylor University	2009

Research Fields

Labor Economics, Economics of Education, Applied Econometrics

Publications

“Student Regional Origins and Student Entrepreneurship”

Regional Studies, 2022, vol. 56(6): pp 956-971, with Jon Eckhardt, Chuan Chen, Bekhzod Khoshimov, and Brent Goldfarb.

Working Papers

“Estimating the Perceived Returns to College” (**Under Review**)

Abstract: College financial aid increases college attendance for recipients who believe their returns to college are near zero and increases government costs for all recipients. Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979, I estimate perceived private returns to college by leveraging exogenous variation in tuition within a model that allows for systematic misperceptions about both costs of college and returns to college. The estimated distribution of perceived returns has low variance relative to estimates of pecuniary lifetime returns, implying large responses to unconditional financial aid offers. I show that the cost-minimizing financial aid policy for an aggregate attendance target makes aid offers conditional on observables, extending more aid to individuals who are less likely to attend college. Relative to unconditional aid increases, policies designed to reduce costs also reduce racial and parent-educational inequality, and policies designed to reduce inequality also reduce costs.

“Peer Effects in University Housing: Evidence from Fuzzy Central Assignment”, with Chao Fu, Jesse Gregory, and Victoria Prowse

Abstract: We estimate effects of roommates, neighbors, and dorms on academic outcomes at a large public four-year university. To address selection, we instrument for realized room assignments with simulated offers generated by a room assignment mechanism, while controlling for expected offers implied by the same mechanism. Our candidate assignment mechanisms fail to perfectly replicate the assignment offers made by the central planner, so we select the mechanism that best replicates assignments via a data-driven model selection procedure. We find that assignment to gender-integrated dorms increases 4-year graduation by 10 percentage points for men, with no significant effects on women, while finding consistent (statistically insignificant) results for exposure to female neighbors within dorms. At the roommate level, we find that STEM roommates have significantly smaller negative effects on four-year graduation for other STEM students than they do for non-STEM students. Our findings suggest that universities with 70% gender-integrated housing (such as the university we study) could increase their male 4-year graduation rates by 3 percentage points by implementing full gender-integration in all dorms, with no offsetting negative effects on women.

“The Effects of Peer Diversity on Entrepreneurship: Evidence from University Residence Halls”, with Jon Eckhardt and Brent Goldfarb

Abstract: We estimate the effects of peer academic diversity and peer gender diversity within college dorms on student entrepreneurship at a large public research university over a period of 4 years. To obtain causal estimates, we instrument for realized peer traits with simulated peer traits determined by the peers students would have been assigned had they been assigned to rooms by a room allocation mechanism that we select, while controlling for the expected peer traits implied by the same mechanism. We find that exposure to peer gender diversity differentially affects men and women and contributes to the gender gap in entrepreneurial intentions. We also find that exposure to peer verbal skill diversity reduces entrepreneurial ideation. Our findings suggest that residentially clustering students by gender and academic strengths can increase student entrepreneurship and reduce the entrepreneurship gender gap.

“Interpreting Instrumental Variable Estimands with Unobserved Treatment Heterogeneity: The Effects of College Education”

Abstract: Many treatment variables used in empirical applications nest multiple unobserved versions of a treatment. I show that instrumental variable (IV) estimands for the effect of a composite treatment are IV-specific weighted averages of effects of unobserved component treatments. Differences between IVs in unobserved component compliance produce differences in IV estimands even without treatment effect heterogeneity. I describe a monotonicity condition under which IV estimands are positively-weighted averages of unobserved component treatment effects. Next, I develop a method that allows instruments that violate this condition to contribute to estimation of treatment effects by allowing them to place nonconvex, outcome-

invariant weights on unobserved component treatments across multiple outcomes. Finally, I apply the method to estimate returns to college, finding wage returns that range from 7% to 30% over the life cycle. My findings emphasize the importance of leveraging instrumental variables that do not shift individuals between versions of treatment, as well as the importance of policies that encourage students to attend “high-return college” in addition to those that encourage “high-return students” to attend college.

“The Effects of Chicago’s Teacher Walkouts on Juvenile Crime”, with Abigail Banan, Mary Kate Batistich, Jillian Carr, and Kendall Kennedy

Abstract: On September 10, 2012, Chicago’s teachers began a strike that forced over 400,000 students out of school for 8 consecutive school days. This study examines how this interruption in schooling affected crime in Chicago, both during and immediately after the strike. Using a variety of methods – interrupted time series analysis, synthetic controls, and place-based intensity of treatment analysis – we find that crime rates in Chicago neither significantly nor substantially changed after the strike, suggesting incapacitation has little role in the effect of education on crime.

“Identifying and Estimating Perceived Returns to Binary Investments”

Abstract: I introduce a new method for estimating agents’ perceived returns to binary investments that exploits the mechanical relationship between perceived prices and perceived returns in binary choice settings. Identification is achieved using instruments for prices that are uncorrelated with both price misperceptions and unobserved components of perceived returns. The method provides estimates of perceived returns in terms of compensating variation, which naturally implies effects for subsidies and taxes. These estimates condition on observed characteristics, allowing for heterogeneity in predicted subsidy and tax effects across types of individuals. Because these estimates are of distributions instead of point elasticities, they imply effects that are nonlinear in policy magnitude. I demonstrate the advantages of the new method relative to two related alternatives in a series of data simulations.

“Coworker Gender Preferences: Effects on Gender Gaps in Occupational Selection and Wages”

Abstract: This paper analyzes the effect of occupational gender composition on job-specific labor supply for workers of each gender. I construct a static model of job selection wherein preferences regarding coworker gender composition produce gender-specific compensating differentials. I estimate the model using maximum likelihood to identify the underlying coworker gender preference parameters. Based on estimated compensating differentials, men’s preference is highest for occupations that are 60% female and lowest for female-dominated occupations. Women prefer jobs that are female-dominated, and are least satisfied with jobs that are 25% male all else equal.

Works in Progress

“A Correction for Nonresponse Bias Using Nonrandomized Followup: Evidence on The Entrepreneurship Gender Gap”, with Jon Eckhardt (Data Analysis Stage)

“Separate Identification and Estimation of Perceived Credit Constraints and Perceived Returns to College Using Observed Attendance Decisions” (Estimator Development Stage)

“Looking out for Number 1,2,...,T: Identity Persistence and Altruism as Microfoundations for Intertemporal Discounting” (Theory Stage)

Honors and Awards

National Science Foundation Grant 2100017 (Collaborator): \$983,486	2021-2024
American Family Insurance Foundation Grant (Collaborator): \$106,611	2021
Krannert Certificate for Outstanding Research, Purdue University	2019
Krannert Ph.D. Research Symposium Top Presentation Award, Purdue University	2018
Certificate for Distinguished Recitation Teaching, Purdue University	2015

Conference and Seminar Presentations

Federal Trade Commission	January 2023
University of Notre Dame	December 2022
Academy of Management Annual Meeting	August 2022
North American Summer Meeting of the Econometric Society	June 2022
Society of Labor Economists Annual Meeting	May 2022
Southern Economics Association Annual Meeting	November 2021
Midwest Economics Association Annual Meeting (SOLE Session)	March 2021
Association for Education Finance and Policy Annual Meeting	March 2021
Southern Economics Association Annual Meeting	November 2020
EALE SOLE AASLE World Conference	June 2020
Southern Economics Association Annual Meeting	November 2019
European Association of Labour Economists Annual Meeting	September 2019
Case Western Reserve University	May 2019
U.S. Census Bureau	April 2019
Kansas State University	January 2019
Southern Economics Association Annual Meeting	November 2018
National Tax Association Annual Meeting	November 2018
Krannert Ph.D. Research Symposium	October 2018
Midwest Economics Association Annual Meeting (SOLE Session)	March 2018
Midwest Economics Association Annual Meeting	March 2017
Krannert PhD Research Symposium	November 2016

Conference and Seminar Administration

Southern Economics Association Annual Meeting (Session Organizer)	November 2022
Midwest Economics Association Annual Meeting (Discussant)	March 2021

Southern Economics Association Annual Meeting (Discussant)	November 2020
Southern Economics Association Annual Meeting (Discussant)	November 2019
Southern Economics Association Annual Meeting (Discussant)	November 2018
Midwest Economics Association Annual Meeting (Discussant)	March 2018
Midwest Economics Association Annual Meeting (Discussant)	March 2017

Teaching Experience

Instructor, Introductory Microeconomics	Summer 2016
Recitation Instructor, Principles of Economics	Spring 2015
Teaching Assistant, Labor Economics	Fall 2018
Teaching Assistant, Intermediate Macroeconomics	Spring 2016, Spring 2017, Summer 2018
Teaching Assistant, MBA Microeconomics	Fall 2014, Fall 2015
Teaching Assistant, MBA Macroeconomics	Fall 2014, Fall 2015

First-Generation College Student Pre-Doctoral Mentoring

Marcelo Gantier Mita (PhD Student: Paris School of Economics)

Referee Experience

Education Economics, Management Science

Professional Memberships

American Economic Association, Econometric Society, Society of Labor Economists, Southern Economic Association