JEANNE SORIN

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Academic Positions

Assistant Professor
Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California Berkeley   *2026–*

Postdoctoral Scholar
Institute for Climate and Sustainable Growth, University of Chicago   *2025–2026*

Education

Ph.D. Economics, University of Chicago   *2019–2025*

M.A. Economics, University of Chicago   *2019–2021*

M.Sc. Economics, Sciences Po   *2016–2019*

B.A. Social Sciences, Sciences Po   *2013–2015*

Research and Teaching Fields

Primary: Development Economics, Urban and Spatial Economics
Secondary: Environmental Economics

Publications and Accepted Papers

Learning is in the Air: Clean Air as an Experience Good (with B. Resosudarmo and Y. Sun).
Accepted at *Journal of Development Economics* based on Pre-Results Review.
AEA RCT Registry No. 0013110

Abstract: *Despite the enormous costs of air pollution, willingness-to-pay (WTP) for clean air in polluted developing contexts remains low. We posit one understudied reason is that clean air is an experience good, whose value is revealed after consumption. We test this using a cluster-randomized trial, and seek to document an experience wedge, i.e. a difference between anticipated and realized utility of consuming a good. We deploy a novel experience-based intervention, installing air monitors and purifiers, potentially a more salient treatment than traditional information in pamphlets or videos. To explore the mechanisms behind the hypothesized wedge, we implement a purifier-only treatment to distinguish between (1) knowledge about objective pollution exposure and (2) the sensory experience of breathing in clean air. This will be the first experimental evidence demonstrating how experience can shift demand for clean air, with implications for public health policy, environmental awareness campaigns, and using WTP estimates in economic evaluations.*

Working Papers

Public Roads on Private Lands: Land Costs and Optimal Road Improvements in Urban Uganda.

Abstract: *Despite the need for transportation infrastructure investments in developing cities, empirical evidence on their net returns is lacking due to data constraints and the common oversight of land acquisition costs. In this paper, I collect novel data to estimate the net returns of 140 km of road improvements in Kampala, Uganda, since 2017, accounting for both benefits and land acquisition costs. Using new surveys with real estate brokers and landowners, I exploit variation in the timing of improvements to estimate local benefits. I develop a quantitative spatial model to capture the city-level impacts*

of the policy, accounting for general equilibrium effects and heterogeneous land acquisition costs. Leveraging the coexistence of three property rights regimes in the city, I show that weak property rights are associated with lower land acquisition costs. I find that the net welfare gains from the realized road improvements were equivalent to a 119 USD transfer per resident, but would have been negative if land had been acquired at market value, as legally mandated under eminent domain, due to the high cost of raising domestic funds. Finally, I solve for the optimal road improvements under different institutional settings and demonstrate the importance of accounting for land costs when designing, funding, and evaluating transportation infrastructure projects, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where land acquisition relies on fragile land and financial institutions.

Jobs in the Smog: Firm Location and Workers Exposure to Pollution in African Cities
(with V. Bassi, M. Kahn, N. Lozano Gracia and T. Porzio).
AEA RCT Registry No. 0014162

Abstract: *Air pollution within African cities is high but unevenly distributed. In principle, individuals could mitigate the severe health risk by working in the less polluted parts of the city. In practice, we show that pollution avoidance is challenging because firms locate on the busiest and most polluted roads searching for customer visibility. Both workers and entrepreneurs bear the cost of this pollution exposure, but the benefits are unequally distributed: profits are much higher in polluted areas, while compensating differentials in wages are minimal. An information experiment reveals limited awareness of pollution, suggesting that workers might be undercompensated for their exposure.*

French Railroad Shrinkage.

Abstract: *Transportation infrastructure determines a location's accessibility and, in turn, is a key driver of demographic and economic distributions across space. Investments and dis-investments in this infrastructure are common, but the impacts of contractionary transportation policies have not been extensively studied. Using a simple modification of the standard quantitative spatial model, I theorize that while positive accessibility changes to a location result in rapid population adjustment, negative changes may create a slow and asymmetric population adjustment due to the presence of slowly depreciating housing capital. This paper provides empirical support for the existence of these non-linear responses by studying the impact of the closure of more than one half of the French railroad between 1930 and 1960. I find that, within a given county, municipalities hit one-standard deviation harder by the policy had a 7 percent lower population growth between 1926 and 1982. This response is slow, strongest between two and four decades after the policy, and is non-linear in the short run: it is systematically lower when estimated on market access decrease than it is for (relative) market access increase.*

Exposures to Indoor and Outdoor PM2.5 in a Developing Megacity (with D. Rahut, B. P. Resosudarmo, D. Suryadarma and Y. Sun).

Abstract: *Exposure to fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) poses major health risks, especially in rapidly urbanizing cities. As urbanization accelerates, people in low and middle-income countries spend more time indoors, where pollution risks remain poorly understood. We present evidence from over 152,000 monitor-hours of indoor $PM_{2.5}$ measurements across homes in Jakarta, Indonesiaone of the worlds largest and most polluted cities. We find that daily means of both indoor and outdoor $PM_{2.5}$ levels are dangerously high, eight times above World Health Organization (WHO)'s health-based guidelines. In addition, indoor $PM_{2.5}$ frequently reach hazardous levels, 40 to 100 times the WHO guideline, levels that outdoor monitors do not capture. Unlike in high-income or low-income rural settings, most indoor pollution originates from outdoor infiltration. Survey data further reveal large inequalities in exposure: lower-income households experience twice the mean indoor $PM_{2.5}$ of higher-income households. Given the high infiltration of outdoor $PM_{2.5}$, especially in dwellings inhabited by the most disadvantaged residents, policymakers should prioritize reducing outdoor sources. Researchers and policymakers should also integrate outdoor air quality mapping with demographically representative indoor monitor-*

ing to close key data gaps, enabling more accurate exposure estimates and better-targeted environmental health policies.

Work in Progress

Traffic Solutions in Delhi (with Michael Greenstone and Anant Sudarshan)

Awards, Scholarships, and Grants

Theodore Schultz Economics Fellowship Award	*2024 - 2025*
Research Grant (w. Y. Sun et al.) (Asian Development Bank) ($99,548)	*2024*
Research Grant (w. Y. Sun) (WEISS) ($49,391)	*2023*
Certificate in Urban Science & Sustainable Development (University of Chicago)	*2023*
PhD Research Grant (STEG-CEPR) ($19,458)	*2023*
Development Economics Research Fund (University of Chicago) ($14,105)	*2023*
Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph Fieldwork Award (CISSR) ($4,800)	*2023*
Pilot Grant (IGC) ($14,165)	*2023*
Project Preparation Grant (IGC)	*2022*
Pilot Grant (w. Y. Sun) (WEISS Fund) ($8,720)	*2021*
Proposal Development Grant (w. Y. Sun) (KCAI JPAL) ($41,696)	*2021*
Berkeley/Sloan Summer School in Environmental and Energy Economics	*2021*
Graduate Fellowship (University of Chicago)	*2019 - 2024*
EPIC DRW Graduate Fellowship (University of Chicago)	*2019 - 2024*
Open Source Economics Laboratory Summer Fellowship (University of Chicago)	*2019*
Best Master's Thesis (Sciences Po)	*2019*
Cum laude (top 10%) bachelor degree (Sciences Po)	*2016*

Teaching Experience

Elements of Econ. Analysis I (undergraduate)	Lecturer	*Fall 2022*
Math Camp (graduate)	TA	*Fall 2023*
App. Microeconomics in Econ. History (graduate)	TA for Prof. Rick Hornbeck	*Winter 2023*
Environmental Economics II (graduate)	TA for Prof. Michael Greenstone	*Winter 2022*
El. of Econ Analysis I Honors (undergraduate)	TA for Prof. Victor Lima	*Fall 2021*

Research Experience and Other Employment

Research Assistant for Prof. M. Greenstone, University of Chicago	*2021*
Research Assistant for Prof. T. Porzio and V. Bassi, Columbia University and USC	*2018-2019*
Research Assistant for Prof. M. Kahn, USC	*2018*
Research Assistant for Prof. F. Oswald, Sciences Po	*2018-2019*
Research Assistant for Prof. J. Cage, Sciences Po	*2016-2017*

Intern Antitrust, NERA Economic Consulting (Paris)   *2017*

Professional Experience

Co-Founder and Organizer of Energy and Env. Econ. Student Sem., University of Chicago *2021–2023*

Conferences	2025-2026: *NBER SI (Development), EEA (planned)*
	2024-2025: *NU GPRL Rookiefest, BREAD, WB Infra4Dev*
	2023-2024: *IGC Uganda Climate Change Workshop, JHU Cities and Development Workshop*
	2022-2023: *LSE Environmental Week, WB-IGC 7th Urbanization & Poverty Res. Research Conference*
	2021-2022: *NBER Summer Institute (Urban), North American Meeting of the Urban Economic Association, Northeast Universities Development Consortium (NEUDC) Conference, STEG Annual Conference* 2020-2021: *PacDev, European*
Refereeing Activity	*Meeting of the Urban Economic Association*
	Journal of Environmental Economics and Management
	Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists

Other Writing

Urbanisation, transport and the environment: Some considerations for a more productive Kampala (with Juliana Oliveira-Cunha), *IGC Policy Brief UGA-24185*

Additional Information

Citizenship	France
Programming Skills	Julia, R, Stata, Python
Languages	French (Native), English (Fluent), Spanish (Intermediate)