

JIEE ZHONG

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Texas A&M University, College Station, expected May 2024

M.A., Economics, Xiamen University, China, June 2018

B.A., Taxation, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, China, June 2013

RESEARCH FIELDS

Education Economics, Labor Economics, Environmental Economics, Crime Economics, and Health Economics

PUBLICATION

“Can Social Media Rhetoric Incite Hate Incidents? Evidence from Trump’s “Chinese Virus” Tweets” (Corresponding author, joint with Andy Cao and Jason M. Lindo), **Journal of Urban Economics (Forthcoming)**

We investigate whether Donald Trump’s “Chinese Virus” tweets contributed to the rise of anti-Asian incidents. We find that the number of incidents spiked following Trump’s initial “Chinese Virus” tweets and the subsequent dramatic rise in internet search activity for the phrase. Difference-in-differences and event-study analyses leveraging spatial variation indicate that this spike in anti-Asian incidents was significantly more pronounced in counties that supported Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election relative to those that supported Hillary Clinton. We estimate that anti-Asian incidents spiked by approximately 4200 percent in Trump-supported counties compared to an increase of approximately 200 percent in Clinton-supported counties.

WORKING PAPERS

“Early Grade Retention Harms Adult Earnings” (Job Market Paper),
Revise and Resubmit to American Economic Journal: Applied Economics

This paper provides the first causal evidence of the effects of grade retention on labor market outcomes using Texas’ policy of retaining third graders who fail a reading test. The fuzzy regression discontinuity design estimates show that grade retention reduces earnings 15 years later by \$4513 (35%), raising violence and absenteeism and reducing high school graduation rates. These findings suggest that grade retention is ineffective in aiding struggling students to catch up academically and disadvantages them in the labor market. Moreover, higher retention rates among Black and Hispanic students, coupled with significant reductions in earnings, contribute to perpetuating racial earnings inequality.

“Lead in the Air: Unraveling the Long-Term Impacts of Lead Exposure” (Joint with Thao Duong)

We study the enduring influence of early childhood lead exposure on long-term earnings and educational outcomes while illuminating the mechanisms behind these effects. Capitalizing on a unique natural experiment resulting from the decline in leaded gasoline use in piston-engine aircraft (PEA) post 9/11, we show that even a slight reduction in lead exposure can significantly bolster earnings between ages 23 and 29 among students in grades 4 to 8. Further results demonstrate that a moderate reduction in lead exposure increases test scores, improves high school graduation rates, increases university or college enrollment, and has no significant effect on risky behaviors.

“The Impact of English Proficient Reclassification on Long-Term Educational and Earnings Outcomes” (Joint with Sijia Zhang and Yayun Chen)

Many states have assessed English proficiency for English learners in light of Title III. Given that over 10% of public elementary and secondary school students in the United States are English learners, a thorough investigation

into the long-term implications of reclassification is warranted. In this paper, we employ data from the Texas Education Research Center that links educational records with labor market outcomes to provide a causal assessment of the long-term impact of English proficient reclassification on earnings. The regression discontinuity design results show that being reclassified as English proficient in grade 3 significantly increases high school graduation rates and earnings 17 years later. However, there are no significant effects on test scores, risky behaviors, and college enrollment.

WORK IN PROGRESS

“The Spillover Effects of Holding Students Back a Grade”

“The Impacts of Light and Noise Exposure on Human Capital Formation: Evidence from Wind Farm Operation” (Joint with Thao Duong)

“The Lifelong Impact of Pre-Kindergarten Education” (Joint with Maya Mikdash)

“Breaking the School-to-Prison Pipeline: The Role of Alternative Education” (Joint with Maya Mikdash)

“Measuring the Negative Impacts of Teachers: Disciplined Teachers and Student Outcomes” (Joint with Maya Mikdash)

PRESENTATIONS

2023 Western Economic Association International 98th Annual Conference

2023 Eastern Economic Association Conferences

2023 LBJ School Policy Research Workshop

2022 Southern Economics Association conferences

2022 Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management

2022 Western Economic Association International 97th Annual Conference

2022 Midwest Economics Association

2021 Health Econ/Health Policy Mentoring Workshop

2020 Successfully Navigating Your Ph.D. Workshop

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record

Microeconomics Theory, Summer 2022

Econometrics Qualifier Camp (Ph.D. core), Summer 2022

Teaching Assistant

Data Science for Economic and Social Issues, Spring 2023

Applied Micro-econometrics (Ph.D. level), Spring 2022

Econometrics 461, Fall 2021

Public Finance 412 (Spring 2020, Fall 2019, Spring 2019)

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Texas A&M University, Prof. Barr, Summer and Fall 2021

REFEREE

Economic Inquiry

HONORS AND AWARDS

The Institute for Humane Studies (IHS) Hayek Fund Scholars Grant Award, June 2022-August 2023

Dissertation Committee

Andrew Christopher Barr (Co-Chair)	abarr@tamu.edu	Texas A&M University
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