

JIEE ZHONG

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Texas A&M University, College Station, expected June 2023

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

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

RESEARCH FIELDS

Applied Microeconomics, Education Economics, Labor Economics, Health Economics, Crime Economics

WORKING PAPERS

“Does test-based retention policy exacerbate or mitigate racial and ethnic inequality?” (Job market paper)

This paper uses the fuzzy RD method to study the effects of grade retention on earnings and educational outcomes by race and ethnicity in Texas’s third-grade test-based retention policy. The results show that third-grade retention reduces earnings in the long run. The adverse impacts on earnings vary by race and ethnicity. Specifically, grade retention significantly reduces earnings for Hispanic students by 24% and African American students by 61%. Despite results indicating that grade retention improves their reading scores in the short run, it adversely impacts their non-cognitive outcomes. While white students are less likely to graduate from high school because of retention, the adverse effects on earnings are inconclusive.

“Did Trump’s “Chinese Virus” Tweets Result in Anti-Asian Behavior?” (Joint with Andy Cao and Jason M. Lindo), revise and resubmit to Journal of Urban Economics

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. Results from an event-study analysis 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 the relative increase in anti-Asian incidents in Trump-supporting counties was over 12 times the baseline rate in such counties during the prior week.

WORK IN PROGRESS

“Tobacco 21 and Youth Substance Use” (Joint with Benjamin Hansen and Joseph J. Sabia)

This paper estimates the effect of the Tobacco 21 law on youth substance use using longitudinal PATH study survey data. Using longitudinal data distinguishes this paper from others that use cross-section data by tracking the change in substance use and social sources for individuals over time. The results show that Tobacco 21 substantially decreases cigarette and e-cigarette use by 3.5 and 6.1 percentage points separately for young adults aged between 18 and 20. Tobacco 21 also has a spillover effect on youth younger than 18 by reducing their cigarette and e-cigarette use. Further, this paper provides new causal evidence of the Tobacco 21 law on youth tobacco sources change. While Tobacco 21 law decreases in-person purchases, it increases the amount of tobacco obtained from social sources and family members.

“The Effect of Lead Exposure on Human Capital Formation: Evidence from Aviation Fuel” (Joint with Thao Duong)

This paper examines whether air quality and students’ outcomes are dose-responsive to the levels of lead deposition. We take advantage of the unregulated leaded gasoline use in piston-engine aircraft (PEA) and leverage a quasi-experiment where PEA operations fell consistently after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Using a fixed-effect model, we estimate the relationship between PEA operation and airborne lead concentration. We find that each PEA flight would significantly increase the lead concentration for areas near the airports, leaving areas further

away from the airports with little to no effect. Exploiting the exogenous decrease in the lead deposition for schools near the airports, we employ difference-in-difference to estimate the causal effect of lead exposure on test scores. The preliminary result shows that lead exposure from PEA operation has a negative and cumulative effect on students' test scores.

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

This paper examines the effects of exposure to light and noise pollution on students' academic, behavioral, and labor market outcomes. We exploit the quasi-exogenous variation in the timing and location of wind farm installations to uncover the causal effects of pollution on students' outcomes in Texas. Specifically, we use the difference-in-difference method to compare the outcomes over time between students attending schools near the wind farms and those far away from it. The students' outcome variables come from Texas ERC that can link individual educational records to labor market outcomes. These data distinguish this paper from others by making it possible to estimate the short-, medium-, and long-term effects of pollution on students' outcomes. This paper will be the first to uncover the causal effects of wind farms on educational and earnings outcomes at the individual student level.

PRESENTATIONS

Western Economic Association International 97th Annual Conference, Portland, OR, June 2022

Midwest Economics Association, Minneapolis, MN, March 2022

Health Econ/Health Policy Mentoring Workshop, virtual, 2021

Successfully Navigating Your Ph.D. Workshop, virtual, 2020

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record

Microeconomics Theory, Summer 2022

Teaching Assistant

Applied Microeconometrics (Ph.D. level course, with recitations), Spring 2022

Econometrics 461 (with recitations), 2021 Fall

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

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

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

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
Jason M. Lindo (Co-Chair)	jlindo@tamu.edu	Texas A&M University
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