

The Wisconsin Economics Association 2018 Annual Conference Proceedings

**Featuring Undergraduate/Graduate Student and Professional Presentations
October 26, 27 - Holiday Inn & Convention Center - Stevens Point, WI**

The Wisconsin Economics Association (WEA) is a non-profit organization whose purposes are the advancement of economic knowledge and the economics profession. In general, the WEA seeks to establish and maintain a strong network among Wisconsin economists as well as economists across the Midwest. The WEA hosts an annual conference for members to exchange ideas, present research and foster collaboration. The conference is typically scheduled in late October or early November.

The WEA is particularly interested in supporting:

- Undergraduate and graduate student research presentation
- Research into the teaching of economics at the college and university level
- Research examining topics of regional interest

[WEA Website Link](#)



In promoting the economic way of thinking, the WEA embodies the spirit of the [Wisconsin Idea](#)

A philosophy embraced by the University of Wisconsin System that holds that university research should be applied to solve problems and improve health, quality of life, the environment, and agriculture for all citizens of the state

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Title: [Examining Low Income Household Food Purchasing Behaviors: Evidence from SNAP, WIC and the Farmers Market](#)

Abstract I: This study compares data on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and non-SNAP household food purchases at one Wisconsin grocery retailer. Results show fruits and vegetables combined represent a larger percent of SNAP purchases compared to soda/sweetened beverages. We also see vegetables purchased more with SNAP benefits than fruits, and fresh produce purchases are more common than purchases of frozen/canned fruits and vegetables. Non-SNAP purchases follow similar patterns with some important and notable differences. Compared to non-SNAP shoppers, a smaller percentage of SNAP spending goes towards fruits and vegetables, while a higher percentage is on sweetened beverages. This research is relevant from a policy perspective as it helps us understand what foods are being purchased by SNAP households before considering changes to the SNAP program.

Abstract II: This study reports on data from a program in one Wisconsin metropolitan area that doubles SNAP benefits used at the farmers market. We compare program usage by SNAP participants in June – September from 2014-2018. The two main goals of this program are to decrease food insecurity while also increasing consumption of healthy and local food, including fruits and vegetables among SNAP participants. Preliminary results show that this program increased the dollars available to spend on food for SNAP participants. We also see that program usage increased over the period of study and participants reported they are eating more fruits and vegetables. These results suggest that SNAP families are gaining access to more food and healthier foods. This research is relevant from a policy perspective as it helps us understand the impacts of a program designed to improve access to healthy foods for low income families.

Abstract III: The Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) was established to increase access to healthy foods for low income women with children. The WIC food package was revised to include fruits and vegetables in 2009 to better align with dietary guidelines. This study reports on data for the rates at which fruit and vegetable vouchers are used by participating WIC families in one Wisconsin metropolitan area. We compare fruit and vegetable voucher usage by WIC participants over a period of five years from 2012 – 2016. Our results show that WIC fruit and vegetable vouchers are used at relatively low rates, but WIC fruit and vegetable voucher usage has increased slightly over time. These results suggest that WIC families are not taking full advantage of their increased access to fruits and vegetables. This research is relevant from a policy perspective as it helps us understand the impacts of a program change designed to increase access to fruits and vegetables for low income families.

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Title: [The Impact of Water Clarity on Home Prices in Vilas and Oneida Counties, Wisconsin](#)

Abstract: This study estimates the residential property value gains associated with improvements in water clarity on 60 Northern Wisconsin lakes. Using a two-stage hedonic model applied to Wisconsin DNR water clarity data and data associated with 271 residential home sales obtained from Zillow.com and County property records. We conclude that a one (1) meter improvement in water clarity would produce a \$8,090.87 – \$32,171.12 improvement in the market price of an average residential property on a lake within the study area. We also conclude that in addition to water clarity the main non-housing attributes that drive property value in the region are the local tax rate and the distance to a public airport.

Student Researcher: Elle Alvarez-Casas, alvarez-casase0562@my.uwstout.edu

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Title: [Effects of Administrative Code NR151 on Phosphorus Levels in Wisconsin Water Bodies](#)

Abstract: This study examines the effects of Wisconsin Administrative Code NR151 on Total Phosphorus levels in Wisconsin surface water bodies. The NR151 was created in 2002 to control nutrient pollution in surface water bodies, which is responsible for economic losses to surrounding areas, e.g., tourism, home prices. The law was updated in 2010 to include additional components that made the NR151 the strictest approach to water quality standards – specifically for nutrients – in the United States. The purpose of this study is to determine whether this set of standards was effective at reducing Total Phosphorus levels in Wisconsin surface water bodies. Surface water quality data from 2000-2017 were collected to create a unique panel dataset to determine the effectiveness of the law after the 2010 revisions. Our analysis uses a difference-in-differences fixed effects model to identify a causal estimate of the effectiveness of the law. Empirical results show that the NR151 has been effective at decreasing phosphorus levels in surface water bodies throughout the state, at the watershed level. Specifically, we find average decreases in Wisconsin surface water body phosphorus levels of 0.053 mg/L since 2010 as a direct result of the modifications to the law.

JEL Classification: K32 Q53, Q57, Q58

Keywords: phosphorus, surface water quality, water quality standards, WI administrative code

Student Researcher: Rebecca Rate, rater@ripon.edu

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Title: [Inequalities in Food Access among Milwaukee Neighborhoods](#)

Abstract: There continues to be debate concerning “food deserts”, or disparities in food access, which disproportionately affect low-income and minority communities. This study adds to the quantitative empirical analysis of these disparities, informed by economic theory. Data for neighborhoods of Milwaukee County in 2016 are used to test whether, controlling for other economic factors, there remains a statistically and economically significant difference in access to various types of food retailers among neighborhoods of different racial compositions. The process is modelled on an empirical analysis done in Erie County, New York in 2008, with some modifications. Travel times from retailers to neighborhoods (census block groups) measured in a geographic information system provide counts of retailers accessible to each neighborhood, for estimation of inter-neighborhood inequalities with Gini coefficients and incidence rate ratios with Poisson regression. We find that there are far fewer large supermarkets accessible to neighborhoods that are predominantly black, compared to those that are predominantly white. By contrast, there are a greater number of smaller grocery stores, also by all travel modes -- driving, walking and bicycling. Results are mixed for convenience and variety stores both in the direction and statistical significance of the difference, but the statistically significant results show more convenience and variety stores in neighborhoods that are predominantly black. If further research confirms higher costs and lesser variety of healthy foods at smaller grocery stores, convenience and variety stores, these results will have troubling implications for public health in the context of a metropolitan area with high levels of racial segregation.

JEL Classifications

I14, Health and Inequality

R12, Size and Spatial Distributions of Regional Economic Activity

R22, (Household Analysis) Other Demand

D22, Firm Behavior: Empirical Analysis

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Title: [Private Animal Welfare standards in the United States](#)

Abstract: In response to changing consumers' taste and increasing preference for higher animal welfare standards many key stakeholders in food supply chains have introduced or adopted different animal welfare practices. On the one hand are large food chain retailers who have a direct interest in addressing consumer needs and capturing any additional value for the credence attributes. On the other hand, are other governance or regulatory institutions who have established third party standards to provide additional levels of assurance. For animal welfare, these governance mechanisms are particularly important given its credence attribute. These standards may or not be identical and may be different for different livestock species. Depending on the species and nature of the supply chain, farmers may have to change their production practices at considerable cost in order to have access to certain markets or maintain existing marketing channels. This study evaluates third-party certification animal welfare standards for the different livestock species in US food retail. We offer insights on potential opportunities and risks to farmers.

Key words: Animal Welfare standards, retailers, third party certification, farmers

JEL classification codes: Q1; Q18; Q12.

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Title: [Forecasting with Neural Networks](#)

Abstract: Recurrent neural networks (RNNs) are an old but rapidly developing class of machine learning algorithms. In the past, RNNs were rarely implemented because they are computationally expensive. However, recent growth in neural networks research, paired with the continued advancements in general computing capabilities, has expanded the use of RNNs. We implement RNNs to forecast financial data. Specifically, we examine the performance of our RNN to forecast financial time series data from the New York Stock Exchange. We then compare its performance to traditional forecasting tools. We found that the performance of RNNs improved when given more data to learn from. However, more data being fed into the network led to higher computational costs. While in its current state, our RNN does not perform as well as some sophisticated forecasting methods, our results are still promising. Using an RNN for forecasting represents a fundamentally different way of framing the problem of regression.

Keywords: Forecasting, Long Short-Term Memory, Machine Learning, Market Research, Neural Networks.

JEL Classification: C53, C81, G17, G40

Graduate Researcher: Shrathinth Venkatesh, venkate3@uwm.edu

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Title: [Changes in the Returns to Education; Evidence from Three Cohorts of the NLSY](#)

Abstract: I study the changes in the returns to education for men over time using three cohorts of the NLS. I find an increase in the college wage premium conditional on cognitive ability and occupation, from 35% for those born between 1941 and 1952 to 56% for those born between 1957 and 1964 followed by a fall to 41% for those born between 1980 and 1984. I also find a similar pattern for high school graduates and those with some college. I find that this drop in the returns to education seems to come from those in the bottom half of the wage distribution. I also decompose the unconditional returns to education and the change in unconditional returns to education over this time and find that cognitive ability plays a larger role than occupational sorting and non-cognitive ability.

Keywords: Returns to education, Returns to cognitive ability, Male workers

JEL Codes: J24, J30, J31

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Affiliation: University of Wisconsin-Superior

Title: [The Number of Public High School Graduates of the Midwest USA: Why is it Projected to Decline?](#)

Abstract: Almost half of the students of University of Wisconsin-Superior (UW-S) are from neighboring Midwest states of the U.S. According to the U.S. Department of Education number of public high school graduates of the United States will be higher in 2024-25 compared to 2011-12. However, the number is projected to be lower in the Midwest and Northeast states of the U.S. This lower number of public high school graduates will have a long term impact on the enrollment size and growth of UW-S. What justifies this projection – social, economic, demographic factor or state/local government policy? This study conducts a preliminary investigation of the reasons that might cause a fall in the number of public high school graduates in the Midwest states. Research method will be comprised of statistical analysis of national and state level data and survey of high school students of Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Keywords: public high school, analysis of education, government policy

JEL classification: I20, I21, I28

Graduate Researcher: Rosemary Kaiser, rkaiser3@wisc.edu

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Title: [Macroeconomic Implications of the Use of Staffing Agencies](#)

Abstract: U.S. data shows that workers provided by staffing agencies play a large role in workforce adjustment during recessions, and a significant amount of work argues that the use of agency workers is affected by policy changes such as increases to required worker benefits. In this paper, a search model with endogenous separations and skill choice is specified that includes both agency and non-agency workers. In this model agency jobs involve a worker, a firm, and a staffing agency while non-agency jobs only involve a worker and a firm. This model is used to address the question of how a 2.5% increase in worker benefits affects the percentage of workers employed as agency workers, as well as the amplitude and persistence of an aggregate shock.

JEL: E32, J22, J23, J24, J31, J68

Keywords: Economic Fluctuations, Temporary Workers, Job Creation, Labor Productivity

Graduate Researcher: John Schwendel, Schwend4@uwm.edu

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Title: [United States Earnings Inequality 1946-2015: A Parametric Approach](#)

Abstract: This paper uses a parametric approach and tax return data to estimate annual state-level earnings distributions among the central body of the United States population from 1946-2015. It also presents simulations which demonstrate the appropriateness of this estimation technique if earnings follow a known distributional form. Specifically, when compared to other strategies for dealing with binned data, the method used here is superior for estimation of inequality indices. Various measures of inequality derived from the distributional parameters are presented. National inequality represented by the Theil index shows growth concentrated in the late 1940s, the late 1960s, and from 2000 onward. The movement of real earnings among the 10th, 50th, and 90th percentile of earners also suggests that the middle class experienced changes strongly related to those in overall inequality. State-level inequality follows a similar pattern, but some variation between states is seen. While this within-state inequality is the most substantial part of national inequality, an inverted W shaped pattern of between-state inequality is also shown, with peaks in the early 1950s and early 2010s.

JEL: C81 D31

Keywords: Parametric Estimation; Earnings Distribution; Intra-state Inequality; Inter-state Inequality

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Title: [A Continuing Investigation of Chinese and American Climate Change Views Including a Calculated Knowledge/Acceptance Score, Support for an International Treaty, Willingness-to-pay for Policy Action](#)

Abstract I: China and the United States share a significant importance regarding potential international climate change mitigation strategies/policies. Surveys were conducted in China and the US in 2015 (N=7,556) and 2017 (N=7,415) to investigate a variety of public views on climate change in these two important countries. Significantly more Chinese reported that human caused climate change is happening compared to Americans with little change from 2015 to 2017. In both years U.S. respondents were more concerned about climate change, while Chinese respondents reported a higher obligation to act to address climate change. Interestingly, there was a significant increase in concern and obligation to act among US. respondents in 2017. A climate change score was also calculated for all respondents for 2015 and 2017. In both years, Chinese scores were higher than for Americans, while U.S. scores were more variable. The difference in mean scores across countries decreased in 2017 driven by increased concern and obligation in the US.

Abstract II: We also investigate support for an international climate treaty in China and the US. Chinese respondents showed significantly greater support in both 2015 and 2017 compared to Americans. In both years, we also found a significant withdraw of support among citizens in both countries conditional on knowing the other country would not participate. Interestingly, there was a significant increase in both unconditional and conditional support among U.S. respondents in 2017, while there was little change in China. Thus, we see a narrowing of the gap in support for a climate treaty between Americans and Chinese. Regression analysis reveals similar results for 2015 and 2017 with climate change score positively correlated with treaty support in both countries. Political affiliation also influences treaty support among Americans.

Abstract III: We also investigate the willingness-to-pay (WTP) for action to reduce GHG emissions among citizens in these two important countries using a contingent valuation framework. Our results show a significantly higher mean WTP among Chinese respondents compared to Americans in purchasing power parity terms in both 2015 and 2017. We also find a higher mean WTP in both countries in 2017 compared to 2015 due to differences in our survey design between the two years. Regression analysis reveals similar results for 2015 and 2017 with climate change score positively correlated with WTP for climate action in both countries. Political affiliation also influences WTP among Americans in both years.

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Faculty Mentor: Dr. Thomas Kemp; kempta@uwec.edu

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Title: [Integrating Applied Field Work into the Undergraduate Economics Curriculum](#)

Abstract: This study documents an undergraduate research methods course incorporating applied field work from preliminary development through outcomes assessment. Conducted in coordination between the UW-Eau Claire Department of Economics and local elected officials in Buffalo County, WI undergraduate students were assigned the task of developing and initiating the implementation of a county-wide economic redevelopment strategy during the Spring term 2018. Course specific learning goals included: Hard skills development (software usage, data acquisition and analysis, benchmarking, and survey design) and soft skills development (presentation of sensitive economic information to lay audiences, teamwork, and survey administration). Preliminary results suggest that field-based coursework improves student learning, student interest in economics, improve local economic performance, and may help to bridge the 'Town versus Gown' divide.

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Affiliation: University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Title: [The Sources of Happiness: Cross-Country Evidence between U.S. and China –](#)

Abstract: In this project, we investigated the issue of happiness in China and the United States. By using data from the World Value Survey (WVS), we empirically tested how various/different factors related to the overall happiness in China and the United States, respectively. The lack of such a comparative study has indicated the importance and relevance of our research. Our results will add new knowledge to the happiness research in the context of developing and developed countries and contribute to the understanding of economic well-being.

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Affiliation: University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Title: [The Economic Progress of Hmong Americans: Determinants of labor force participation and wages](#)

Abstract: This study examines measures of economic progress and success among Hmong refugees in the United States. Growth in earnings over time is a result of higher labor force participation rates and higher wages. We investigate these determinants using econometric methods. The academic literature on the economic assimilation of immigrants shows that immigrants' earnings usually grow significantly over time as improvements in English language skills, education and work experience lead to higher wages. In this study we investigate whether the experience of Hmong refugees has followed this pattern. We primarily employ statistical and regression analysis of Census and American Community Survey (ACS) data retrieved from the database maintained by IPUMS at the University of Minnesota. Our data include thousands of Hmong Americans who arrived in the U.S. between 1975 and 2015. Increases in average earnings for Hmong refugees were mostly due to increases in labor force participation rates, not higher wages.

Student Researcher: Hermes Duran, DURANAHK7080@uwec.edu

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Affiliation: University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, University of Wisconsin Baraboo/Sauk County

Title: [An Examination Overdose Death Rates per County vs. Levels of Education per County](#)

Abstract: With a rising level of opioid usage, our group decided that a relevant project would incorporate the rate of overdose deaths with another variable within the state to build a better understanding of who is being affected. For our project we want to determine if there is a correlation between the overdose rates per county and education levels per county in the state of Wisconsin. We will be evaluating the rates of both through government and state websites that give information on the opioid crisis and other support websites to help combat and prevent overdoses.

Our group predicts that, given the two factors, there will be a negative correlation between overdose rates and the levels of education. We predict that this can be justified by low levels of income attributed to low education levels. A potential setback might occur with being able to find a regression line that is significant enough to establish a correlation.

There are many social effects of the opioid crisis in the United States, however, there are also economic effects that are impacting the nation's GDP, employment levels, and government costs for opioid related spending. With the right programs, the rate of opioid abuse can decrease and bringing more people back into the workforce and increasing productivity for the United States and Wisconsin.

Student Researcher: Viktor Sallhag, vsallhag@uwsuper.edu

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Affiliation: University of Wisconsin-Superior

Title: [Female Empowerment and Economic Growth](#)

Abstract: This study examines the relationship between female empowerment and economic growth. Almost every country in the world has to some extent gender inequality that is favorable for men. Especially in developing countries, it is most likely that the gap is more significant between men and women, compared to developed countries. Decreasing the gender inequality can be an essential strategy for a country to start their development process and improve their citizen's living standards. The primary focus of this paper is to evaluate the relationship between Gross Domestic Product per capita and different aspects of female empowerment. An empirical analysis of 150 countries is utilized to show how women empowerment affects a nation's economic growth.

Keywords: female empowerment, gender inequality, economic growth

JEL classification: J16, O15, O11

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Title: [Trade Openness and Its Impact on Economic Growth in China](#)

Abstract: In this paper, the relationship between trade openness and economic growth is analyzed for China – from 1978, after the market reform to 2015. In the past, the relationship has been examined by many economists and various conclusions were derived. Most of the previous studies pointed toward a positive relationship between trade openness and economic growth, in both the short-run and the long-run and that these indicators are intertwined. The results of this empirical study support earlier conclusions that there is a positive relationship between trade openness and economic growth; however, in this case, with a lag of three years. Furthermore, the study shows that other explanatory variables play important roles in predicting economic growth of China.

Keywords: trade openness, economic growth, China

JEL classification: F14, O11, H11

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Title: [Retail Industry Outlook of the City of Superior, Wisconsin](#)

Abstract: The retail industry in the United States has changed over the years. There is a noticeable movement from in-store shopping to online shopping due to change in consumer demand and consumer behavior. This trend is reflected in closures of retail stores in the City of Superior, Wisconsin. Even neighboring city Duluth of Minnesota is facing the same outcomes of big box stores like Younkers and Sears closing down. Given such developments, the purpose of this study is to provide an overview of the current status and future outlook of the retail industry of the City of Superior. To fulfill our research objectives, we performed literature review and conducted expert interviews of representatives from the City of Superior Municipality, Superior-Douglas County Chambers of Commerce, Small Business Development Center (SBDC), and the City of Superior Mayor's Office. Findings from our study helped us construct a list of policy recommendations which we think, if introduced, will encourage local entrepreneurs and small business owners to thrive in City of Superior and other small towns and establishments around Wisconsin.

Keywords: consumer behavior, retail industry, big box stores

JEL classification: D12, D22, L81

Researcher: Dr. Belkis Cerrato, BCerrato@edgewood.edu

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Title: [Food Label Use Among Mexican Consumers: Does Health Knowledge Matter?](#)

Abstract: The rapid increase in obesity and related non-communicable diseases led the Mexican government to pass a comprehensive obesity prevention strategy that included raising awareness of the health problems associated with obesity, encouraging people to exercise and monitor their weight through the campaign “Checate, Midete, Muevete”, increased taxes on sugary beverages in 2014, and began to require Front-of-package (FOP) nutritional labeling for domestic and imported prepackaged foods starting in 2015. In particular, FOP labeling has become a popular method to promote healthier food choices or warn consumers, as is the case in Chile, of the fat, calories, and sugar present in foods. Unlike labels on the back of processed foods, FOPs are readily noticeable, and information is simplified to help the consumer make healthier food choices. The purpose of the present study is to study Mexican consumer’s understanding and use of FOPs to make purchasing decisions.

Using the 2016 Mexican national survey on health and nutrition, this research controls for factors that affect food label use such as individuals’ socio-demographic characteristics, health knowledge, objective and subjective nutrition knowledge, convenience, and health status. Knowledge on obesity prevention campaigns is included as additional explanatory variable. Binary models were used to estimate how each of the factors affect the probability of label use. Preliminary results and summary statistics suggest the following: Although a significant number of people are aware of the government campaigns and the connection between obesity and various non-communicable diseases, about 1/5 of the respondents use FOP labels to make their consumption decisions. In addition, results suggest that health knowledge does not increase label use.

JEL Codes: I10, Q18

Keywords: Health, Mexico, Food Labels

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Title: [Competency Based Education: Our Experience with a Survey of Economics Course](#)

Abstract: Not Available

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Title: [Influence of Public Programs and a Natural Barrier in Mitigating Health Risks from Major Storms: Evidence from Coastal Households in Bangladesh](#)

Abstract: This paper introduces a theoretical model that allows the estimation of a household's valuation of health risks from major storms given the presence of public storm protection programs and a natural barrier. An endogenous risk framework is developed in which the household can employ ex-ante self-protection and ex-post self-insurance activities to protect against storm-inflicted health problems. Our theoretical model reveals possible estimation methods to derive households' marginal willingness to pay to reduce health risks with increase access to public programs and the greater storm protection role of mangroves. Results show that these marginal willingness-to-pay measures can be derived without the expected utility terms since they are a function of only prices and technological parameters. Our empirical analysis of coastal households of Bangladesh impacted by 2007 Cyclone Sidr shows that the households are willing to pay the highest amount for greater storm protection from mangroves followed by publicly constructed embankments and post-disaster relief programs. These findings indicate that the government has the local support to develop effective mangrove restoration projects and publicly sponsored embankments and dams around one of the most vulnerable poor coastal areas of the world from major storm events.

Key words: Self-protection; health risks; coastal storms; mangroves; Cyclone Sidr; Bangladesh.

JEL Classifications: D81, H31, I12, Q54

Graduate Researcher: Carolyn McNamara, cmcnamara6@wisc.edu

Affiliation: University of Wisconsin-Madison

Title: [Sharing & Selection in the Airbnb Market](#)

Abstract: How much demand for sharing is there in sharing economies? This paper looks at Airbnb, an online platform on which consumers may purchase short-term rentals from peer providers and develops a structural model of demand and supply quantifying the importance of the product characteristic "shared" in consumer preferences. Differentiating Airbnb units on the degree of sharing they offer, I examine how close of substitutes Airbnbs of the same degree of sharing are via an estimated structural model in which guests choose their type of unit and hosts choose their prices. The estimated model reveals that guest's demand exhibits strong segmentation on the basis of sharing. Using my estimates, I conduct a counterfactual examining the impact of a policy aimed at reducing the number of private Airbnbs booked. I find that a proposed differential tax on Airbnbs only marginally reduces demand for private units at great expense to shared units.

Keywords: Market Structure, Pricing, and Design; Market Structure, Firm Strategy, and Market Performance; Regulation and Industrial Policy; Real Estate Services; Information and Internet Services

JEL codes: D4, L1, L5, L85, L86

Researcher: Dr. James M. White, james.white@uwrf.edu

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Title: [Exit in the Wisconsin Dairy Industry: Why You Might Want to and Why it Might Be Difficult](#)

Abstract: This presentation explores the challenge faced by Wisconsin dairy farmers in a changing and unfavorable market environment. In particular, a number of Wisconsin dairy farmers are facing strong pressure to exit amidst strong economies of scale, low commodity prices, changing regulatory environments, succession issues and an unwillingness to adopt new business models. While neoclassical economic theory assumes “free exit”, meaning no non-economic costs and a rational decision-making process, in reality producers face strong pressures to remain in the industry despite subpar profitability. This presentation also presents the results of a survey of Wisconsin dairy producers, indicating that more than half would remain in the industry despite economic incentives to exit.

Keywords: Dairy farms, dairy farming, Capital Investment decisions, Industry structure, Entry and exit decisions

JEL codes: G31, L16, Q12, Q14

Researcher: Dr. Nicholas Lovett, lovett@uww.edu

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Title: [Policing, Crime and Deterrence: Evidence from Rare Homicides](#)

Abstract: I empirically evaluate the effect of increased policing intensity on criminal offending by using a novel natural experiment in conjunction with detailed, high-frequency, criminal incident data. I leverage the occurrence of homicides in police jurisdictions where homicides are a very rare occurrence as a quasi-random shock to policing intensity as law enforcement seeks to assuage the concerns of a public unaccustomed to homicide. I then evaluate the patterns of criminal offending before, and in the immediate aftermath of, a rare homicide using both a regression discontinuity in time design and an event study. I find substantial declines in criminal offending, and reveal distinct declines in violent, drug and total crimes with reductions as large as 8.1% for violent crime and 24.5% for drug crime. Results are highly significant and robust to a wide range of specifications, estimation techniques and sample refinements. This paper contributes by separating deterrence effects from incapacitation effects, revealing the time evolution of reductions in crime, and evaluating the ability of police to deter crime through increases in police manpower via the intensive margin alone. I also contribute by documenting drug offender rationality in response to an elevated police presence and shed light on criminal offending and policing in communities outside large urban centers.

Keywords: Homicide, policing, deterrence, regression discontinuity in time, event study.

JEL Classification: J18, K14, K42, H76

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Affiliation: University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh

Title: [Student Comprehension of Principles of Macroeconomic Textbooks in a Randomized Controlled Trial](#)

Abstract: Along multiple dimensions, Principles of Macroeconomic textbooks appear to be similar. We test their similarities using a randomized controlled trial where students answer multiple choice questions using an excerpt from a Principles of Macroeconomics textbook. We find student comprehension can vary substantially depending upon the textbook and topic. For instance, scores vary by as much as 18% on Gross Domestic Product questions, and 5% on production possibility frontier and comparative advantage questions. The results also show students score better on one topic and worse on another when using an open source textbook.

Keywords: textbook comprehension and effectiveness, randomized controlled trial, PPF, comparative advantage, Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

JEL Codes: A2, E00

Day One Schedule/Agenda

Friday – October 26	
8:00–9:00a	*Registration – Refreshments/Networking
9:00–9:10a	Welcome & Opening Remarks – Eric Jamelske, WEA President
Session 1	
9:10–10:00a	Examining Low Income Household Food Purchasing Behaviors: Evidence from SNAP, WIC and the Farmers Market – Jake Arneson, Jared Fogarty, Nathan Gilger, Emma Halverson, Olivia Jonasen, Ben Miller, Rivin Perinchery, Kelly Schneider, Levi Soborowicz & Nevada Sweitzer, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
10:00–10:10a	*Questions & Discussion
10:10–10:15a	*Refreshment/Networking Break
Session 2	
10:15–10:30a	The Impact of Water Clarity on Home Prices in Vilas and Oneida Counties, Wisconsin – Andrew Fink & Shangqian Wu, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
10:30–10:45a	Effects of Administrative Code NR151 on Phosphorus Levels in Wisconsin Water Bodies – Elle Alvarez-Casas, University of Wisconsin-Stout
10:45–11:00a	Inequalities in Food Access among Milwaukee Neighborhoods – Rebecca Rate, Ripon College
11:00–11:10a	*Questions & Discussion
11:10–11:20a	*Refreshment/Networking Break
Session 3	
11:20–11:35a	Private Animal Welfare standards in the United States – Michaela Eden, University of Wisconsin-River Falls
11:35–11:50a	Forecasting with Neural Networks – Joseph Stephenson & Timothy Thumbi, Beloit College
11:50–12:00p	*Questions & Discussion
Luncheon, Conversation, Networking (12:00–1:10p)	
Session 4	
1:10–1:30p	Changes in the Returns to Education; Evidence from Three Cohorts of the NLSY – Shrathinth Venkatesh, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
1:30–1:50p	The Number of Public High School Graduates of the Midwest USA: Why is it projected to decline – Rubana Mahjabeen & Praopan Pratoomchat, University of Wisconsin-Superior
1:50–2:00p	*Questions & Discussion
2:00–2:05p	*Refreshment/Networking Break
Session 5	
2:05–2:25p	Macroeconomic Implications of the Use of Staffing Agencies – Rosemary Kaiser, University of Wisconsin-Madison
2:25–2:45p	United States Earnings Inequality 1946-2015: A Parametric Approach – John Schwendel, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
2:45–2:55p	*Questions & Discussion
2:55–3:05p	*Refreshment/Networking Break
Session 6	
3:05–3:55p	A Continuing Investigation of Chinese and American Climate Change Views – Connor Adams, Clayton Cavanaugh, Adara Coker, Will Guenther, Angela Hugunin, Eric Mallmann, Andrew Moran, Carly Morris, Trung Nguyen & Lily Strehlow, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
3:55–4:05p	*Questions & Discussion

Day Two Schedule/Agenda

Saturday – October 27	
8:15–9:15a	*Registration – Refreshments/Networking
Session 7	
9:15–9:30a	Integrating Applied Field Work into the Undergraduate Economics Curriculum – Nathan Goodell, Megan Roehl & Brady Seidlitz, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
9:30–9:45a	The Sources of Happiness: Cross-Country Evidence between U.S. and China – Madeleine Mayer, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
9:45–10:00a	Economic Progress of Hmong Refugees – Samantha Majeski & Andrew Moran, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
10:00–10:15a	An Examination Overdose Death Rates per County vs. Levels of Education per County – Hermes Duran, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
10:15–10:30a	*Questions & Discussion
10:30–10:40a	*Refreshment/Networking Break
Session 8	
10:40–10:55a	Female Empowerment and Economic Growth – Viktor Sallhag, University of Wisconsin-Superior
10:55–11:10a	Trade Openness and Its Impact on Economic Growth in China– Olle Sedelius, University of Wisconsin- Superior
11:10–11:25a	Retail Industry Outlook of the City of Superior – Obiageli Ekwunwa & Opeyemi Omiwale, University of Wisconsin- Superior
11:25–11:45a	Food Label Use Among Mexican Consumers: Does Health Knowledge Matter – Belkis Cerrato, Edgewood College
11:45a–12:05p	*Questions & Discussion
Luncheon, Conversation, Networking & Education Presentations (12:05–1:45p)	
Competency Based Education: Our Experience with a Survey of Economics Course – Laura Wind-Norton and Laura Prince, Nicolet College	
Session 9	
1:45–2:05p	Influence of Public Programs and a Natural Barrier in Mitigating Health Risks from Major Storms: Evidence from Coastal Households in Bangladesh – Sakib Mahmud, University of Wisconsin-Superior
2:05–2:25p	Sharing & Selection in the Airbnb Market – Carolyn McNamara, University of Wisconsin-Madison
2:25–2:35p	*Questions & Discussion
2:35–2:40p	*Refreshment/Networking Break
Session 10	
2:40–3:00p	Exit in the Wisconsin Dairy Industry: Why You Might Want To and Why It Might Be Difficult – James M. White, University of Wisconsin-River Falls
3:00–3:20p	Policing, Crime and Deterrence: Evidence from Rare Homicides – Nicholas Lovett, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
3:20–3:40p	Student Comprehension of Principles of Macroeconomic Textbooks in a Randomized Controlled Trial – Bryan Englehardt & Andrew Miller
3:40–3:55p	*Questions and Discussion
3:55–4:05p	Farewell & Closing Remarks – Eric Jamelske, WEA President (outgoing)

List of Attendee/Presenter Institutional Affiliations

Beloit College: Joseph Stephenson and Timothy Thumbi

Carroll University: Dennis Debrecht

Edgewood College: Belkis Cerrato Caceres

Madison Area Technical College: Ron Dunbar

Moraine Park Technical College: Paul Kwiecinski

Nicolet College: Laura Prince and Laura Wind-Norton

Ripon College: Soren Hauge and Rebecca Rate

Saint Joseph's Hospital-Ministry Health: Andrew Weier

University of Wisconsin-Platteville-Baraboo/Sauk County: Musa Ayar

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire: Connor Adams, Jake Arneson, Clayton Cavanaugh, Adara Coker, Hermes Duran, Andrew Fink, Jared Fogarty, Nathan Gilger, Nathaniel Goodell, August Will Guenthner, Emma Halverson, Angela Hugunin, Eric Jamelske, Olivia Jonasen, Thomas Kemp, Samantha Majeski, Eric Mallmann, Madeleine Mayer, Benjamin Miller, Andrew Moran, Carly Morris, Trung Nguyen, Rivin Perinchery, Megan Roehl, Kelly Schneider, Brady Seidlitz, Levi Soborowicz, Lillian Strehlow, Nevada Sweitzer and Shangqian Wu

University of Wisconsin-Fond du Lac: Sayeed Payesteh

University of Wisconsin-Green Bay: John Stoll

University of Wisconsin-Green Bay-Sheboygan: Raunio Matthew

University of Wisconsin-Madison: Rosemary Kaiser and Carolyn McNamara

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee: John Schwendel and Shrathinth Venkatesh

University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh: Bryan Engelhardt and Andy Miller

University of Wisconsin-River Falls: Michaela Eden and James White

University of Wisconsin-Stout: Elle Alavarez

University of Wisconsin-Superior: Sequoia Borner, Sajid Chowdhury, Obiageli Ekwunwa, Matias Espinoza Lopez, Rubana Mahjabeen, Sakib Mahmud, Opeyemi Omiwale, Praopan Pratoomchat, Viktor Sallhag and Olle Sedelius

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater: Nicholas Lovett

Waukesha County Technical College: Daniel Mering, Cory Wanek and Akente Ward

Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College: Damian VonFrank