

# CHEPS

CENTER FOR HEALTH ECONOMICS &  
POLICY STUDIES



## INSIDE:

Celebrating Four Years of Excellence in Public Policy Research and  
Graduate Student Mentorship

VOLUME 4



SAN DIEGO STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
College of Arts & Letters

2021-2022

# Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

As the Center for Health Economics and Policy Studies (CHEPS) completes its fourth year, I am excited to bring you news of the important public policy research in which our fabulous graduate students have been engaged. Thanks to the efforts of our partners at the Charles Koch Foundation, the Troesh Family Foundation, and San Diego State University, our graduate student successes and faculty research accomplishments have reached new heights.



The Center's pioneering public policy research has not only been published in leading economics, medical, and public policy journals such as the *Journal of Law and Economics*, the *Journal of Labor Economics*, the *Journal of Urban Economics*, the *Journal of Public Economics*, the *Economic Journal*, *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, the *Journal of Human Resources*, the *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, *World Economy*, the *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty*, and the *Journal of Health Economics*, but has also received national (and international) media attention in such outlets as the *Wall Street Journal*, *Bloomberg*, *Forbes*, the *Washington Post*, *Bloomberg*, *USA Today*, the *National Review*, and the *Jerusalem Post*. We have made a real and lasting impact.

The "Take of the Tape" for our research mentoring efforts, including the last four years at CHEPS, is quite impressive:

- 31 graduate and undergraduate students have received research fellowships; 5 more will be join the team this Fall;
- 16 former MA Economics students have been accepted to PhD programs at such institutions as Cornell University, Michigan State University, the University of California-Santa Barbara, the University of Washington, Colorado State University, the University of Oregon, Fordham University, the University of California-Davis, Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium), and Claremont Graduate University;
- 96 Research Seminars have been held by researchers visiting from institutions such as the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the University of Kentucky, the University of California-Santa Barbara, Cornell University, Texas A&M University, the University of Southern California, the University of California-Davis, Vanderbilt University, George Washington University, and the University of Georgia;
- 5 postdoctoral research appointments for our former graduate students at such institutions as the University of California, Los Angeles, Montana State University, the University of Bath, Amazon, and Analysis Group;

- 67 peer-reviewed publications have been achieved at high quality economics, medical, policy journals such as the *Journal of Law and Economics*, the *Journal of Urban Economics*, *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, the *Journal of Health Economics*, the *Journal of Human Resources*, the *Journal of Political Economy*, *JAMA: Pediatrics*, *World Economy*, the *Review of Economics and Statistics*, *Review of Economics of the Household*, and the *Journal of Applied Econometrics*;
- 22 working papers published by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) and 13 working papers at the Institute of Labor Economics (IZA); and
- 38 academic research conferences and workshops at which CHEPS Affiliates have presented their cutting-edge scholarship

Among the research projects on which graduate students have been engaged include:

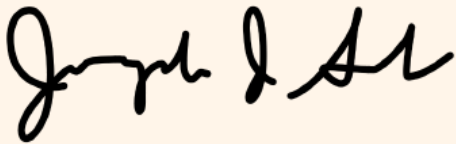
- an examination of the impact of the U.S. Capitol Riot on mobility patterns and the spread of COVID-19;
- an exploration of the impact of electronic cigarette taxes on youth e-cigarette use, traditional cigarette use, and other related risky behaviors;
- an examination of whether recreational marijuana serves as a “gateway” to harder drug use and crime;
- a study exploring whether alcohol regulations designed to make it harder for those under age 21 to buy alcohol are truly effective at reducing teen drinking;
- an examination of whether a \$15 Federal minimum wage is likely to be an effective means of delivering income to the working poor;
- a study exploring the impact of Tobacco-21 laws, which raises the minimum legal purchasing age for cigarettes to 21, are an effective means of reducing teenage tobacco use;
- an examination of whether E-Verify programs reduce criminal activity among immigrants and natives;
- a study examining whether city gun buyback programs are an effective means to reduce gun violence;
- an exploration of whether expanding border wall construction reduces crime; and
- a study examining whether school closing policies during the pandemic had a disproportionately harmful effect on women with young children

These projects have been critical for not only furthering important public policy debates, but also serving the career goals of many of our graduate students who have worked on these projects.



Every year, I am more and more inspired by our fantastic faculty team and our amazing graduate students. I hope you will enjoy reading about our team in *CHEPS Magazine*. With your support, we will continue doing what we love — teaching, training, and inspiring the next generation of student researchers!

Sincerely,



Joseph J. Sabia  
Director, Center for Health Economics & Policy Studies (CHEPS)  
Professor of Economics



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# CHEPS Research

## Did the Statewide Reopening of the Texas Economy Lead to Economic Growth or a Surge of COVID-19?

*"With the medical advancements of vaccines and antibody therapeutic drugs, Texas now has the tools to protect Texans from the virus.... Too many Texans have been sidelined from employment opportunities. Too many small business owners have struggled to pay their bills. This must end. It is now time to open Texas 100%."*

- Texas Governor Greg Abbott, March 3, 2021

*"I think it's a big mistake... The last thing -- the last thing we need is Neanderthal thinking that in the meantime, everything's fine, take off your mask, forget it. It still matters."*

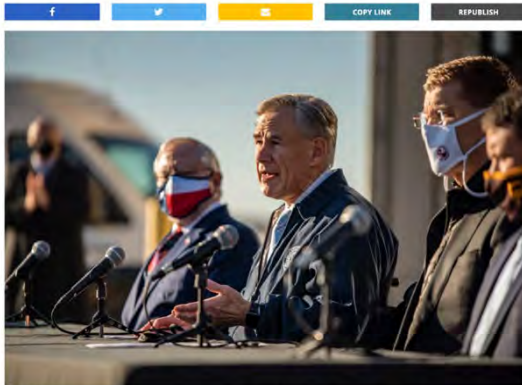
- U.S. President Joseph R. Biden, March 3, 2021

In the midst of mass COVID-19 vaccination distribution efforts in the U.S., Texas became the first state to abolish its mask mandate and fully lift capacity constraints for all businesses, taking effect on March 10, 2021. The policy announcement elicited immediate, passionate reaction. Proponents claimed that the reopening would generate short-run employment growth and signal a return to normal while opponents argued that it would cause a resurgence of COVID-19 and kill Texans.

### Gov. Greg Abbott says he's rescinding statewide mask mandate and capacity limits on businesses

The change, which comes as the seven-day average of new coronavirus deaths remains above 200, will go into effect March 10.

BY PATRICK SVITEK MARCH 2, 2021 UPDATED: 9 PM CENTRAL



Gov. Greg Abbott during a press conference in Austin on Dec. 17, 2020. © Sergio Flores for The Texas Tribune

A new *National Bureau of Economic Research* Working Paper, released in June 2021, finds that each side was largely incorrect. This study, written by Dhaval Dave, Samuel Safford, and Joseph Sabia documents several important findings. First, using daily anonymized smartphone data — and synthetic control and difference-in-differences approaches — the study finds no evidence that the Texas reopening led to substantial changes in mobility, including foot traffic at a wide set of business establishments. Second, there is no evidence that the Texas reopening affected the rate of new COVID-19 cases during the five weeks following the reopening. The null results persist across more urbanized and less

urbanized counties, as well as across counties that supported Donald Trump and Joe Biden in the 2020 presidential election. Finally, there is no evidence that the Texas reopening impacted short-run employment, including in industries most affected by the reopening.

# Will a Higher Minimum Wage Reduce Poverty?

*"No one should work 40 hours a week and live below the poverty wage. And if you're making less than \$15 an hour, you're living below the poverty wage."*

- President Joseph R. Biden (2020)



During the 85 years since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the constitutionality of minimum wage laws (*West Coast Hotel Co. v. Parrish*, 300 U.S. 379 (1937)), advocates of minimum wage increases have consistently touted their potential to reduce poverty. The potential of ever-higher minimum wages to reduce poverty has taken center stage in the recent federal debate over the *Raise the Wage Act of 2021*. This new legislation, advocated by President Joe

Biden, would more than double the Federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$15 per hour by June 2025, raise the “tipped” minimum wage from \$2.13 to \$15 per hour by June 2026, and eliminate subminimum wages for younger teenagers and workers with disabilities. According to a February 2021 Congressional Budget Office (CBO) analysis, a \$15 minimum wage would directly impact approximately 17 million U.S. workers earning hourly wages below \$15, indirectly affect 10 million more who earn wages slightly above \$15.

If minimum wage increases boost hourly wages paid to near-poor workers — without causing substantial adverse labor demand effects — such hikes could raise family incomes and lift workers above the poverty line. Moreover, if minimum wage increases boost spending among workers with a higher marginal propensity to consume, they could induce longer-run economic growth that lifts poor workers out of poverty. On the other hand, if minimum wage increases increase labor costs to firms, and low-skilled labor markets are competitive, such hikes could reduce employment and work hours among low-skilled workers. If these employment losses are felt by some poor and near-poor workers, their family incomes could fall, thereby plunging some low-skilled workers into (deeper) poverty. Thus, the impacts of minimum wage increases may resemble income redistribution among poor and near-poor families. Therefore, the net impact of minimum wage increases on poverty rates depends on (i) wage, employment, and hours elasticities with respect to the minimum wage, (ii) the distribution of earnings gains and losses for workers with household incomes near the poverty threshold, and (iii) spillover effects of the minimum wage on output prices and longer-run economic growth.

This study will make three contributions to the minimum wage-poverty literature. First, it will provide new evidence on the impacts of recent, large increases in state minimum increases. While larger increases bring with them the possibility of larger family income gains and poverty rate reductions, such increases may also be accompanied by larger adverse labor demand effects that plunge some families into poverty. Second, we will attempt to reconcile our findings with recent evidence that minimum wage increases enacted prior to the Great Recession were associated with declines in poverty. Finally, to address the current policy discussion over a federal minimum wage increase, we will explore the effectiveness of \$15 (and \$11) per hour minimum wage in delivering income to the working poor.



# Is Recreational Marijuana a Gateway to Harder Drug Use and Crime?

*"There's not nearly enough evidence as to whether or not marijuana is a gateway drug."*

- President Joseph Biden (2021)

*"Let's be clear: marijuana isn't a gateway drug and should be legalized."*

- Vice President Kamala Harris (2021)



Recreational marijuana laws (RMLs), which legalize the possession, sale, and consumption of marijuana for recreational purposes, have been adopted by 18 states and the District of Columbia. RMLs are a relatively recent phenomenon. In November of 2012, Colorado and Washington became the first states to adopt RMLs, but it was not until 2014 that recreational dispensaries, or "pot shops," opened in these states. More than 6 years later, researchers are just beginning to gauge the public health consequences of legalizing recreational, as opposed to medical marijuana.

Unlike most medical marijuana laws (MMLs), RMLs, do not require a doctor's recommendation, nor do they require registration. Under RMLs, possession of a limited amount of marijuana (e.g., one or two ounces) by anyone 21 years of age or older is legal, and purchases of marijuana can be made at recreational dispensaries simply by showing proof of age. Most RML states allow marijuana plants to be grown at home. However, in Washington D.C., home cultivation is allowed, but its RML prohibits the exchange of money, goods, or services for marijuana; transfers of up to an ounce of marijuana, are, however, legal.

While support for legalization has increased markedly in the last decade, some policymakers and public health experts have expressed concern that legalization for recreational purposes will, through a gateway effect, encourage the use of "harder" substances such as cocaine, heroin, fentanyl, and methamphetamines, generating substantial public health costs, including drug-related overdoses.





While many of the costs of hard drug use are privately borne to the extent that addiction to hard drugs is rational, there are a number of reasons to expect that some of the costs of hard drug use will not be internalized. For instance, if preferences are time-inconsistent and reflect hyperbolic discounting of future wellbeing, addictive drug use may exceed that which is socially optimal. Moreover, for some younger hard drug users, decision-making over consuming addictive substances may not be rational due to underdevelopment of the prefrontal cortex. Finally, addiction may lead to more crime — i.e., income-generating crime to finance one's addiction or violent offenses as a result of one's altered state of mind — thereby imposing costs of hard drug use on to third parties. Together, these external costs of legalization should be weighed against the utility gains from consumption, as well as the cost savings from reduced incarceration, to judge the efficacy of legalization from a social welfare perspective.

This study will be the first to comprehensively examine the impacts of state recreational marijuana laws (RMLs) on a wide set of outcomes related to hard drug use, including illicit non-marijuana related consumption, drug-related arrests, property and violent offenses, substance use disorders, admissions for treatment for hard drug addiction, and mortality due to drug-related overdoses.

Using state-level panel data from 2000-2019 from a variety of national datasets — the National Survey of Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), the Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS), and the Vital Statistics Multiple-Cause-of-Death Mortality Files (MCDMF) — and a difference-in-differences identification strategy, a new research team, including Claremont Graduate University Doctoral Students Abdullah Alswelh and Fawaz Alotaibi (who are from CGU's Computational Justice Lab) will examine the impact of RMLs on marijuana use, “hard” drug use, substance use disorder, admissions for drug treatment, property and violent crime arrests, and drug-related overdose deaths.



Assessing the effects of RMLs on the use of harder drugs, drug-related overdose deaths, and criminal behavior is critically important. From a social welfare perspective, addiction, crime, and treatment costs may not be taken into account by private actors. Documenting the existence and magnitude of these “external” costs is the first step in assessing the net benefits of RMLs. The findings from this project will provide important information to state and federal policymakers considering the adoption of RMLs as well as those who wish to liberalize access to marijuana while minimizing their negative spillovers.

## Are Tobacco-21 Laws Effective?

*“We should do everything we can to prevent young people from smoking and save lives. Increasing the tobacco age to 21 will help achieve these goals... Increasing the tobacco age to 21 [will also] reduce the likelihood that a high school student will be able to legally purchase tobacco products for other students and underage friends.”*

- Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (2020)

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, responsible for over 480,000 deaths each year. Its consumption has been linked to increased risk of heart disease, cancers of the lung, liver, head, and colon, diminished respiratory function, and stroke (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2014). The social costs of tobacco consumption are substantial, with estimates of the annual health care costs of treating tobacco-related illnesses totaling nearly \$200 billion. Estimates of the external costs of smoking — driven by exposure to secondhand, or even thirdhand, tobacco smoke — exceed \$7 billion.



The vast majority of adult smokers initiate tobacco use as minors, with a mean age of smoking initiation of 15.3. Given that youth smokers (i) are more likely than adults to have time-inconsistent preferences that give insufficient weight to future costs of addiction, (ii) often fail to account for the external costs of smoking when choosing current consumption, and (iii) typically obtain tobacco products via the informal social market, policymakers have often targeted anti-smoking campaigns at youths.

A new *National Bureau of Economic Research* Working Paper, released in December 2020 by Benjamin Hansen, Drew McNichols, Calvin Bryan, and Joseph Sabia studies the impact of Tobacco-21 laws. Tobacco 21 (T-21) laws prohibit the sale of tobacco products to individuals under age 21. Using data from the 2009-2019 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS), the authors find that the enactment of a statewide T-21 law was associated with a 2.5 to 3.9 percentage-point decline in smoking participation among 18-to-20-year-olds. Next, using data from the 2009-2019 State Youth Risky Behavior Surveys (YRBS), they find that statewide T-21 laws reduced tobacco cigarette and electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) consumption among 18-year-old high school students. Finally, we find that T-21 laws generate important spillovers including (i) a reduction in tobacco cigarette use among 16-to-17-year-olds, a group that relies heavily on the “social market” — including 18-year-old peers — to access tobacco, and (ii) reductions in both marijuana use and frequency of alcohol consumption among older teenagers.

## Was the U.S. Capitol Riot a COVID-19 Surge Event?

On January 6, 2020, the U.S. Capitol was sieged by rioters protesting certification of Joseph R. Biden's election as the 46th president of the United States. The Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) quickly predicted that the Riot would be a COVID-19 "surge event."

In a *National Bureau of Economic Research* working paper released in February 2021, Dhaval Dave, Drew McNichols, and Joseph Sabia examine the impact of the Capitol Riot on risk-averting behavior and community-level spread of the novel coronavirus. They use anonymized smartphone data from SafeGraph, Inc. and an event-study approach to document that on January 6th there was a substantial increase in non-resident smartphone pings in the census block groups including the Ellipse, the National Mall, and the U.S. Capitol Building, consistent with a large protest that day. Next, using data from the same source and a synthetic control approach, they find that the Capitol Riot increased stay-at-home behavior among District of Columbia residents, indicative of risk averting behaviors in response to violence and health risks.

They find no evidence that the Capitol Riot substantially increased community spread of COVID-19 in the District of Columbia in the month-long period following the event. This may be due to increases in social distancing and a "virtual lockdown" of the Capitol prior to the inauguration of the new president. Finally, exploiting variation in non-resident smartphone inflows into the January 6 Capitol protest, they find that counties with the highest protester inflows experienced a significant increase in the rate of daily cumulative COVID-19 case growth in the month following the protest. Together, the results of this study suggest important public health costs of the U.S. Capitol Riot. These findings add to our understanding of the large social costs of this insurrection event to the health and wellbeing of the Republic.





## Minimum Wages and Teen Fertility: A Reassessment

Giving birth as a teenager is associated with increases in the risk of dropping out of high school and living in poverty, while children born to teenage mothers clearly struggle cognitively and economically as compared to children born to older mothers. Although the U.S. adolescent fertility rate has declined substantially since 2007, it is still higher than in any other developed country, and many other policy interventions aimed at reducing childbearing rates have had little effect. CHEPS researchers have begun their investigation of the minimum wage as a potential policy tool for curbing teen pregnancy rates, but there is theoretical possibility to both sides of the argument. By raising the minimum wage, there is the possibility that teenagers may respond to better labor market opportunities by working harder and delaying childbearing. Taken at face value, this hypothesis suggests that raising the minimum wage could substantially reduce the public costs of teenage childbearing, which are estimated to be \$9.4 billion per year.



The current study undertaken by CHEPS researchers employs the most recent years of data which include frequent, large minimum wage increases, in addition to cutting-edge empirical methods that allow for dynamic fertility effects over time that may differ across states that increase their minimum wage, and a thorough exploration the mechanisms through which the minimum wage could have an impact on teen fertility such as the minimum wage's impacts on the teen marriage rate, abortion rate, and sexual behavior.

In theory, the relationship between minimum wages and teenage childbearing depends upon the employment effect and its magnitude. Teenagers who are laid off (or work fewer hours) after an increase in the minimum wage may find that condoms and other forms of contraception have become unaffordable; those who retain their minimum-wage job and experience an increase in earnings may be more likely to use contraception, purposely postponing becoming a parent. However, it is also possible that teenagers who experience a minimum wage increase may become more financially stable, and thus may be more likely to be interested in settling down and starting a family, thus increasing the teen fertility rate. CHEPS researchers have taken pleasure in thoroughly evaluating what would otherwise be an ostensibly ambiguous conclusion and look forward to contributing their insights to this important policy debate at the intersection of minimum wages and public health outcomes.

## Electronic Cigarette Taxes and Youth Tobacco Use

Since first entering American markets in 2006 as an advertised “healthier” version of traditional cigarettes, e-cigarette use has grown dramatically, especially among teens and young adults. The use of electronic nicotine products among high school students has risen from one in four teenagers in 2011 to one in three by 2019. Over this same period, tobacco cigarette use fell by over 50 percent, starkly following an increase between 2003 and 2011. This trend suggests that vaping could be pushing current smokers toward a middle ground between traditional cigarettes and the complete cessation of smoking.



Some policymakers have argued that e-cigarettes might foster safer nicotine addictions than traditional cigarettes since carcinogen exposure is lower for both the smoker and second-hand exposure, though this claim has fallen under scrutiny by public health and medical researchers. Despite the trend suggesting that rising e-cigarette use coincides with declines in tobacco cigarette smoking, public health officials have continued to raise concerns that e-cigarette products might instead be inducing a return to the use of cigarettes, leading policymakers to enact minimum legal purchasing age (MLPA) laws and institute taxes on e-cigarette cartridges.

In order to examine the complicated relationship between taxes, e-cigarette use, and potential substitution to traditional combustible tobacco products, CHEPS has joined forces with leading tobacco-use researchers Catherine Maclean, Michael Pesko, Rahi Abouk, Charles Courtemanche, Abigail Friedman, Bo Feng, and Dhaval Dave to study the impact of electronic cigarette taxes on youth e-cigarette use and “traditional” cigarette consumption.

Using data from both the Monitoring the Future (MTF) and Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBS) surveys, the research team seeks to examine both the impact of e-cigarette taxes on different levels of e-cigarette use, as well as the potential spillover effects that vaping has had on current tobacco use.

Follow-up studies involving CHEPS researchers will explore whether the impacts of e-cigarette taxes differ by characteristics of youth — including sexual identity — as well as whether electronic cigarette taxes generate spillovers to other youth risky behaviors, including alcohol use, marijuana use, and harder drug use.

## Vertical License Laws and Teen Drinking Behavior

Continuing the Center's interest in examining youth risky behaviors, CHEPS is currently conducting work to assess the efficacy of so-called vertical license laws (VLLs), under which minors (below 21 years of age) are issued vertically oriented drivers licenses or ID cards, before they are eventually given horizontally oriented replacements upon reaching the legal drinking age. Considering the persistent prevalence of youth involvement in alcohol-related traffic fatalities, we believe that this work has real merit for the public well-being. After all, car crashes are the leading cause of death for teens, and, according to the NHTSA, about a quarter of those crashes involve alcohol.



The first VLL was enacted in Colorado in 1994, and by 2009 over 40 states had adopted such policies. The underlying idea of these policies is that the drastic difference in ID appearance between those of legal age and those below should make it easier for alcoholic beverage retailers to quickly determine whether an individual is legally eligible to purchase alcohol.

We seek to analyze this subject by taking advantage of Youth Risky Behavior Surveillance

System (YRBS) survey data going back to 1991, employing recent breakthroughs in econometric techniques, and considering data from states that have recently adopted these policies. With current YRBS survey data available to us through 2019, we can test whether VLLs are meeting their policy goals as they become the norm across the country. Additionally, we bring in data from the complementary State-level YRBS, which features a large number of observations across a slightly different collection of states. Combining the State and National YRBS, we can get a better idea of the drinking behavior of teenagers on a national level. Finally, modern statistical techniques (pioneered by Spring CHEPS Seminar speaker Andrew Goodman-Bacon) allow us to more accurately assess the effects of policies enacted with staggered treatment timing. Since VLLs were rolled out gradually by states over the course of 25 years, this project constitutes an ideal opportunity to use some of the new tools available to researchers to shed some light on this policy, which has reasonably broad public safety and health implications.

We plan to push the analysis of these policies past the binary question of whether teens drink alcohol, towards the more relevant questions of binge drinking behavior, drinking and driving, and the channels through which teens obtain their alcohol. Clearly, binge drinking behavior and driving under the influence are important questions as they relate to the broader public health issues associated with alcohol, such as alcoholism, alcohol-related sexual assault, and traffic fatalities. Investigating whether the source of teens' alcohol is affected by VLLs is similarly important, as the answer to this question allows us to assess whether VLLs have actually changed the underage black market for alcohol, which likely has snowballing effects on these other, larger public health issues.



# Anti-Bullying Laws and Youth Risky Behaviors

In 2020, CHEPS Director Joseph Sabia and MA student Alicia Marquez released their paper “Anti-Bullying Laws and Youth Risky Health Behaviors” as a CHEPS working paper. This paper was motivated by the large epidemiological literature suggesting that bullying victimization is causally linked to detrimental behavior among youth. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has urged districts to adopt a “public health approach” when combating bullying in schools. While bullying is still a large issue in U.S. high schools, with 20 percent of teenagers reporting being victimized by bullying in 2017, the public health implications of bullying victimization led CHEPS researchers to question whether the link between victimization and risky health behaviors was in fact causal or was instead the result of perpetrators’ non-random targeting of vulnerable victims.

Epidemiological studies examining the relationship between bullying victimization and risky health behaviors have treated bullying victimization as exogenous to other unmeasured determinants of behavioral health. This assumption may be problematic for a number of reasons. While those who are bullied clearly do not choose to be victims, they may be non-randomly targeted by perpetrators. For example, perpetrators may bully those who are more vulnerable, who have fewer social support networks, or who have higher personal discount rates, all of which are characteristics that are difficult-to-observe and also related to risky health behaviors. Bullies may also explicitly target victims who engage in risky behaviors as an observable signal of vulnerability.



This study circumvents empirical challenges faced by prior researchers by exploring the impacts of state anti-bullying laws (ABLs) on risky health behaviors. State ABLs require local school districts to implement anti-bullying policies that (i) identify perpetrators and victims of bullying, (ii) punish, educate, and rehabilitate offenders, and (iii) stigmatize bullying behavior. By increasing the probability of detection, increasing punishment, and reducing the psychic benefits of bullying, ABLs are hypothesized to raise the expected costs

of bullying to potential perpetrators, thus curbing its occurrence. We posit that the enactment of state ABLs may generate a plausibly exogenous decline in bullying victimization. Thus, if there is a causal link between bullying victimization and teenage risky behaviors, we might expect such behaviors to decline following ABL enactment.

Using the National and State Youth Risk Behavior Surveys (YRBS) and variation in state level anti-bullying laws (ABL), Sabia and Marquez find that while ABLs are effective in reducing bullying victimization among U.S. high school students, there is no evidence that they lead to economically important or statistically significant changes in teenage binge drinking, tobacco cigarette use, marijuana consumption, risky sexual behavior, or body weight.

## Did the 2020 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally Act as a “Superspreader” Event?

Alongside research on preventative measures to curb the spread of Covid-19, a number of “super spreader” events have been closely scrutinized by both public health researchers and the national media. In this study, Dhaval Dave, Drew McNichols, and Joseph Sabia examined the 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, a 10-day event with dozens of concerts, live performances, races, and bike shows that drew over 460,000 individuals to a city with a population of approximately 7,000 located in a county with a population of approximately 26,000. COVID-19 mitigation efforts at the Sturgis Rally were largely left to the “personal responsibility” of attendees and post-opening day media reports suggest that social distancing and mask-wearing were quite rare in Sturgis.

RESEARCH ARTICLE

**Southern Economic Journal** WILEY

### **The contagion externality of a superspreading event: The Sturgis Motorcycle Rally and COVID-19**

**Dhaval Dave<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> | Drew McNichols<sup>4,5,6</sup> | Joseph J. Sabia<sup>4,6,2</sup>**

The Sturgis Motorcycle Rally represents a situation where many of the “worst case scenarios” for superspreading occurred simultaneously: the event was prolonged, included individuals packed closely together, involved a large out-of-town population (a population that was orders of magnitude larger than the local population), and had low compliance with recommended infection countermeasures such as the use of masks. The only large factors working to prevent the spread of infection were the outdoor venue and low population density in the state of South Dakota.

The authors document three key results. First, using anonymized smartphone data from SafeGraph, Inc., we demonstrate that non-resident cell phone pings rose in the census block groups where the Sturgis events took place over the 10-day period of the rally relative to other census block groups within South Dakota and in border states to South Dakota. Furthermore, we find that foot traffic at restaurants and bars, hotels, entertainment venues, and retail establishments in areas hosting Sturgis Rally events rose by up to 90 percent during the event. There was a 9.4 to 10.9 percent decline in median hours spent at home. Finally, turning to COVID-19 case data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), we find that the Sturgis Rally caused spread of COVID-19 cases both locally and in the home counties of those who traveled to the Sturgis Rally and returned home.

The authors’ findings, published in the *Southern Economic Journal*, underscore that local COVID-19-related policy decisions over events that generate large local economic benefits, but diffuse external health costs (such as the decision by South Dakota policy officials to hold the Sturgis event) may not be socially optimal.

# Did the Wisconsin Supreme Court Cause a Statewide Resurgence of a Pandemic?

On May 13, 2020, the Wisconsin State Supreme Court struck down Wisconsin's "Safer at Home Order" in *Wisconsin Legislature v. Palm*. The force and effect of this legal ruling was dramatic and immediate. The entire statewide order was overturned, making Wisconsin the only U.S. state without a single statewide protective measure in place. Wisconsin's Governor Tony Evers said that the ruling had "thrown the state into chaos," and predicted that "people are going to get sick."

Dhaval Dave, Andrew Friedson, Drew McNichols, Joseph Sabia, and Kyu Matsuzawa released a *National Bureau of Economic Research* Working Paper in 2020 to identify the causal effect of Wisconsin's SIPO termination on social distancing and COVID-19 cases.

This study exploits the unique experiment to identify the causal effect of Wisconsin's SIPO termination on social distancing and COVID-19 cases. First, using anonymized, geospatial smartphone data from SafeGraph, Inc. from May 3 through June 2, and a synthetic control approach, the authors find no evidence that the statewide legal order significantly affected net stay-at-home behavior as measured by the percent of time spent at home full-time (extensive margin) and median hours spent at home (intensive margin). Their analyses of "point of interest" data do, however, suggest some evidence that foot traffic at restaurants and bars rose following the Supreme Court decision.



Then, turning to data on COVID-19 cases and deaths collected by the *New York Times* from May 3 through June 12, synthetic control estimates fail to detect any evidence that the Wisconsin Supreme Court order affected COVID-19 cases up to a month following the state's SIPO repeal. This post-treatment period (i) exceeds the incubation period of COVID-19 and (ii) represents a window during which studies of policy shocks or non-household gatherings have detected substantial changes in COVID-19 spread. The authors' null results are robust to the choice of donor states and to matching variables used to create synthetic weights, including COVID-19 case rates per 100,000 population on all pre-treatment days, urbanicity rate, population density, COVID-19 testing rates, pre-treatment social distancing, and other business reopening policies. In summary, the authors' findings suggest that the role of information may be particularly important in understanding asymmetry in the health effects of SIPO adoption and repeal.



# CHEPS in the Media



CHEPS garnered more media attention this year than ever before, with both national (and international) media attention in such outlets as the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, *Bloomberg*, *USA Today*, the *National Review*, and the *Jerusalem Post*. With over 80 media mentions including full subject articles at CNN, *NBC News*, *Forbes*, *The Independent*

(UK), and *Buzzfeed*, in addition to interviews for radio stations such as KCBS, KPBS, and CTV in Canada, and the periodical *Texas Monthly*, it is without a doubt that the crucial policy analysis done by CHEPS is investigating questions at the forefront of American and global interest.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a difficult time for every American, regardless of political affiliation, age, or geographical location. It was a time when states were experimenting with very different strategies to curb the spread of COVID-19 at the lowest economic cost. Often these policies were quite different from each other. And as unsettling as this time period was, CHEPS had a unique opportunity to do what CHEPS does best -- to evaluate the efficacy and analyze the impact of health policies across the United States as politically impartial social scientists. And whether it was our groundbreaking scholarship on COVID-19, our exploration of the effects of criminal justice reforms, or examination of liberalization of access to marijuana, or our evaluation of gun safety policies, CHEPS made important contributions to public policy debates.



# Research Highlights: Revise & Resubmits

## Post-9/11 War Deployments Increased Crime among Veterans

Resul Cesur, Joseph J. Sabia & Erdal Tekin

WORKING PAPER 27279 DOI 10.3386/w27279 ISSUE DATE May 2020

Several high-profile news stories have linked post-September 11 (9/11) combat service to violent crime among veterans. Nevertheless, there is scant causal evidence for this claim. We exploit the administrative procedures by which U.S. Armed Forces senior commanders conditionally randomly assign active-duty servicemen to overseas deployments to estimate the causal impact of

modern warfare on crime. Using data from two national surveys and a unified framework, we find consistent evidence that post-9/11 combat service substantially increased the probability of crime commission among veterans. Combat increases the likelihood of property and violent crime, arrest, gang membership, trouble with police, and punishment under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Back-of-the-envelope calculations suggest that post-9/11 combat exposure generated approximately \$26.7 billion in additional crime costs. Finally, we document descriptive evidence that Traumatic Brain Injury and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) may be important mechanisms to explain post-9/11 combat-induced increases in crime. This study, co-authored by Resul Cesur, Joseph Sabia, and Erdal Tekin has received a revise-and-resubmit at the *Journal of Law and Economics*.

Sparked by the killing of George Floyd in police custody, the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests have brought a new wave of attention to the issue of inequality within criminal justice. However, many public health officials have warned that mass protests could lead to a reduction in social distancing behavior, spurring a resurgence of COVID-19. This study, co-authored by Dhaval Dave, Andrew Friedson, Kyutaro Matsuzawa, Joseph Sabia and Samuel

Safford, uses newly collected data on protests to estimate the impacts of mass protests on social distancing, COVID-19 case growth, and COVID-19-related deaths.

## Black Lives Matter Protests and Risk Avoidance: The Case of Civil Unrest During a Pandemic

Dhaval M. Dave, Andrew I. Friedson, Kyutaro Matsuzawa, Joseph J. Sabia & Samuel Safford

WORKING PAPER 27408 DOI 10.3386/w27408 ISSUE DATE June 2020 REVISION DATE January 2021

Event-study analyses provide strong evidence that net stay-at-home behavior increased following protest onset, consistent with the hypothesis that non-protesters' behavior was substantially affected by urban protests. This effect was not fully explained by the imposition of city curfews. Estimated effects were generally larger for persistent protests and those accompanied by media reports of violence. Furthermore, we find no evidence that urban protests reignited COVID-19 case or death growth after more than five weeks following the onset of protests. We conclude that predictions of population-level spikes in COVID-19 cases from Black Lives Matter protests were

too narrowly conceived because of failure to account for non-participants' behavioral responses to large gatherings.

"Black Lives Matter Protests and Risk Avoidance: The Case of Civil Unrest During a Pandemic" has been submitted to the *Journal of Human Resources*, where it is currently in the process of being revised and resubmitted.

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#### ANTI-BULLYING LAWS AND SUICIDAL BEHAVIORS AMONG TEENAGERS

Daniel I. Rees  
Joseph J. Sabia  
Gokhan Kumpas

Working Paper 26777  
<http://www.nber.org/papers/w26777>

NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH  
1050 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
February 2020

The CDC reports that the association between bullying and suicides among teenagers has generated "concern, even panic," but policies aimed at combatting bullying have received little attention from researchers. Using a difference-in-differences estimation strategy, we find that state-level anti-bullying laws (ABLs) reduce

bullying victimization, depression and suicidal ideation, with the largest estimated effects for female teenagers and teenagers who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning. In addition, ABLs are associated with a 13-16 percent reduction in the suicide rate of female 14- through 18-year-olds. Event-study analyses and falsification tests provide evidence that these estimates can be interpreted causally. This study, co-authored by Daniel I. Rees, Joseph Sabia, and Gokhan Kumpas has received a revise-and-resubmit at the *Journal of Policy Analysis & Management*.





# Do Minimum Wage Increases Reduce Crime?

Zachary S. Fone, Joseph J. Sabia & Resul Cesur

WORKING PAPER 25647

DOI 10.3386/w25647

ISSUE DATE March 2019

REVISION DATE November 2020

An April 2016 Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) report advocated raising the minimum wage to deter crime. This recommendation rests on the assumption that minimum wage hikes increase the returns to legitimate labor market work while generating minimal adverse employment effects. This study comprehensively assesses the impact of minimum wages on arrests using data from the 1998-

2016 Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) and the 1998-2016 waves of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97). In contrast to the CEA claim, our results provide no evidence that minimum wage increases reduce arrests. Instead, we find that raising the minimum wage *increases* property crime arrests among 16-to-24-year-olds, with an estimated elasticity of approximately 0.2. This result persists when we use longitudinal data to isolate workers for whom minimum wages bind. Auxiliary analyses using the Current Population Survey (CPS) suggest that our findings are likely driven by adverse labor demand effects of the minimum wage. Our estimates suggest that a \$15 Federal minimum wage could generate criminal externality costs of nearly \$2.5 billion. This study, co-authored by Zachary Fone, Resul Cesur, and Joseph Sabia has received a revise-and-resubmit at the *Journal of Public Economics*.

## More Sports, Less Crime: Title IX Reduced Female Arrests



Advocates of youth sports programs, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, argue that athletic competition reduces crime among participants, thereby generating external social benefits. However, next to nothing is known about the causal impact of sports participation on crime. Using data from the 1980-2000 Uniform Crime Reports, and exploiting plausibly exogenous variation in female sports participation generated by the introduction of the 1972 educational amendments to Title IX, Drew McNichols, Joseph Sabia, and Gokhan Kumpas find that a 10-percentage point increase in female high school sports participation reduced arrests among affected cohorts of 25-to-39-

year-old females by 0.5 arrest per 1,000 population. Arrest reductions are observed for both property and violent offenses. These results are consistent with substantial Title IX-induced gains in educational attainment and labor market outcomes for affected female birth cohorts. The magnitudes of our estimates suggest that the full implementation of Title IX generated approximately \$4.86 billion in social benefits from crime reduction. This study has received a revise-and-resubmit at the *Journal of Human Resources*.

# Research Highlights: Acceptances

## Were Urban Cowboys Enough to Control COVID-19? Local Shelter-in-Place Orders and Coronavirus Case Growth

***ACCEPTED, JOURNAL OF URBAN ECONOMICS***

One of the most common policy prescriptions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 has been to legally enforce social distancing through shelter-in-place orders (SIPOs). This study examines the role of localized urban SIPO policy in curbing COVID-19 cases. Specifically, Dhaval Dave, Andrew Friedson, Kyutaro Matsuzawa, Joseph Sabia, and Samuel Safford explore (i) the comparative effectiveness of county-level SIPOs in urbanized as compared to non-urbanized areas, (ii) the mechanisms through which SIPO adoption in urban counties yields COVID-related health benefits, and (iii) whether late adoption of a statewide SIPO yields health benefits beyond those achieved from early adopting counties. We exploit the unique laboratory of Texas, a state in which the early adoption of local SIPOs by densely populated counties covered almost two-thirds of the state's population prior to adoption of a statewide SIPO on April 2, 2020.

Using an event study framework, the authors document that countywide SIPO adoption is associated with an 8 percent increase in the percent of residents who remain at home full-time and between a 13 to 19 percent decrease in foot-traffic at venues that may contribute to the spread of COVID-19 such as restaurants, bars, hotels, and entertainment venues. These social distancing effects are largest in urbanized and densely populated counties.

Then, the authors find that in early adopting urban counties, COVID-19 case growth fell by 21 to 26 percentage points two-and-a-half weeks following adoption of a SIPO, a result robust to controls for county-level heterogeneity in COVID-19 outbreak timing, coronavirus testing, the age distribution, and political preferences. They find that approximately 90 percent of the curbed growth in COVID-19 cases in Texas came from the early adoption of SIPOs by urbanized counties, suggesting that the later statewide shelter-in-place mandate yielded relatively few health benefits.

These findings have large implications for the policy landscape going forward. If the benefits of SIPOs are concentrated in urban areas, then the use of these restrictive policies statewide may not be necessary when fighting outbreaks. More nuanced policy strategies that are stricter in dense urban areas and looser in other areas may yield similar health benefits without imposing the costs, both in terms of economic activity and in terms of inconvenience on part of the population.



# Shelter-in-Place Orders and Public Health: Evidence from California During the COVID-19 Pandemic

**ACCEPTED, JOURNAL OF POLICY ANALYSIS & MANAGEMENT**

*"I simply do not know if our aggressive actions early on ... have had the intended effect ... I certainly am hoping and praying that that is the case. We still need the data to confirm that."*

—Grant Colfax, San Francisco Director of Public Health, March 31, 2020

On March 19, 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom issued the first statewide SIPO in the United States. The order closed non-essential businesses and required residents to shelter in place for all but essential activities such as grocery shopping, retrieving prescriptions from a pharmacy, or caring for relatives. This study is the first in the economics literature to estimate the effect of a statewide SIPO on public health.

Using daily state-level coronavirus data and a synthetic control research design, Andrew Friedson, Drew McNichols, Joseph Sabia, and Dhaval Dave find that California's statewide SIPO reduced COVID-19 cases by 160.9 to 194.7 per 100,000 population by April 20, one month following the order. We further find that California's SIPO led to as many as 1,566 fewer COVID-19 deaths during this period. Back-of-the-envelope calculations suggest that there were about 649 to 703 job losses per life saved, and about 14 to 16 job losses per case averted during this post-treatment period.

These findings have several policy implications for pandemic response. Most important is the top line result that SIPOs were effective at slowing the early spread of COVID-19, and thus can be an effective tool for subsequent waves of COVID-19 or for future pandemics with similar means of transmission, so long as the population responds to future SIPOs in a similar manner. This study also underscores the importance of California's early action, and serves as a plausible upper bound for the benefits of a SIPO. When compared to estimates from Dave et al. (2020a), who find that the average state-level SIPO decreases cumulative cases by 3,073 after almost a month, which translates to approximately 47.9 cases per 100,000 population for the average state, the benefits of the California SIPO are considerably larger.





# The Effect of E-Verify Laws on Crime

## **ACCEPTED, INDUSTRIAL AND LABOR RELATIONS REVIEW**

The last two decades have seen explosive growth in the number of interior immigration enforcement policies in the United States. One of the most widespread of these policies requires employers to verify the work eligibility of recent hires. Such statutes, known as E-Verify mandates, have been adopted by 23 states and the federal government. Under an E-Verify mandate, employers must compare information from their new hires' Employment Eligibility Verification (I-9) forms with electronic records from the Social Security Administration and Department of Homeland Security. An employee's name, Social Security number, date of birth, citizenship status, and (if applicable) noncitizen-related information is compared to electronic federal records to assess work eligibility. A mismatch prompts an alert to the employer that must be resolved within 10 federal workdays or the employee must be fired. Failure to comply with state E-Verify laws can result in substantial fines for employers as well as business license revocation. The majority of state E-Verify mandates apply to public employers or private employers with public contracts, while 8 mandates extend to private employers.



This study, co-authored by Brandyn Churchill, Taylor Mackay, Andrew Dickenson, and Joseph Sabia asks, “Do E-Verify laws have important spillover effects on crime?” The impact of state E-Verify mandates on crime is theoretically ambiguous. The policy’s net crime impact depends on the magnitudes of its effects on (i) labor market outcomes for low-skilled immigrants (unauthorized and authorized) and natives, (ii) mobility of affected workers, and (iii) the distribution of these effects across low-skilled populations with heterogeneous propensities for crime.

On one hand, E-Verify may reduce unauthorized immigrants’ labor market prospects, leading to an increase in property or drug crimes for income-generating purposes. Furthermore, if unauthorized immigrants serve as complements to higher-skilled native workers, unemployment among natives may increase crime. E-Verify laws may also shift the population composition away from likely unauthorized immigrants and toward low-skilled natives. On the other hand, if low-skilled natives and immigrants are labor substitutes, then improved labor market prospects for natives may reduce crime involving natives. E-Verify mandates may also reduce crime if there is a net outmigration of low-skilled Hispanics. Finally, E-Verify may reduce unauthorized immigrants’ willingness to report crime due to fear of detection.

Using data from the 2004-2015 National Incident-Based Reporting System and the Uniform Crime Reports — and a difference-in-differences empirical strategy — this study is the first to comprehensively examine the impact of state E-Verify mandates on crime, with special attention to criminal incidents involving arrestees of Hispanic descent. Supplemental analysis of the 2004-2015 Current Population Survey explores potential mechanisms through which E-Verify could affect crime: (1) employment opportunities for low-skilled immigrants and natives, and (2) the demographic (i.e., low-skilled immigrant) composition of states.

# Risk Avoidance, Offsetting Community Effects, and COVID-19: Evidence from an Indoor Political Rally

***ACCEPTED, JOURNAL OF RISK AND UNCERTAINTY***



On June 20, 2020, President Donald J. Trump held his first mass campaign rally following the outbreak of COVID-19. Held in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the political gathering attracted 6,000 to 12,000 individuals to the indoor Bank of Oklahoma (BOK) arena. This study is the first to explore the impact of this event on the spread of COVID-19.

First, using data from SafeGraph Inc, Dhaval Dave, Andrew Friedson, Kyutaro Matsuzawa, Drew McNichols, Connor Redpath, and Joseph Sabia show that while non-resident visits to census block

groups hosting the Trump event grew by approximately 25 percent, there was no decline in net stay-at-home behavior in Tulsa county, reflecting important offsetting behavioral effects. Then, using data on coronavirus cases from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and a synthetic control design, the authors find little evidence that COVID-19 case growth grew more rapidly in Tulsa County, its border counties, or in the state of Oklahoma than each's estimated counterfactual in the three weeks following the campaign rally.

Difference-in-differences estimates further provide no evidence that COVID-19 case rates grew faster in counties that drew relatively larger shares of residents to the event. We conclude that offsetting behavioral responses to the rally — including voluntary closures of restaurants and bars in downtown Tulsa, increases in stay-at-home behavior, displacement of usual activities of weekend inflows, and smaller-than-expected crowd attendance — may be important mechanisms.

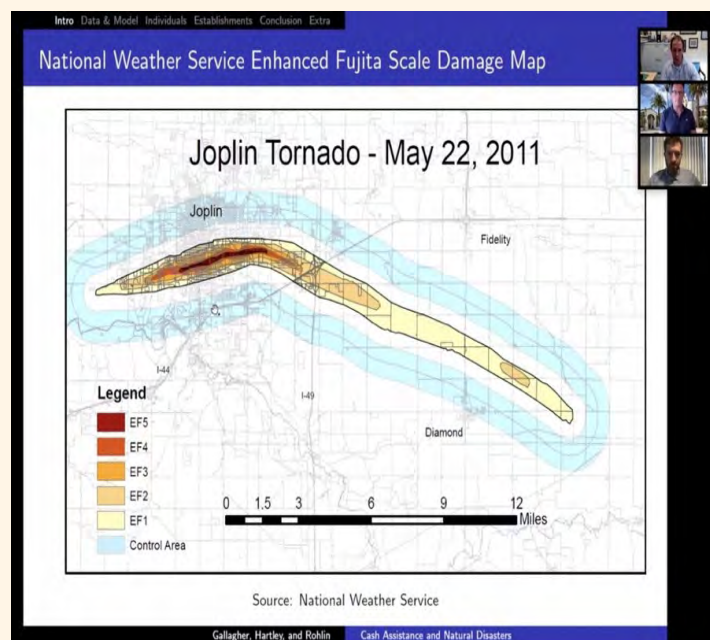
While the authors' findings suggest that the first large indoor gathering in the United States since the COVID-19 shutdowns was not associated with a significant rise in confirmed cases, the complexities of the potential mechanisms at play may not imply that all indoor gatherings of a similar scale are necessarily low-risk. Our work highlights the fact that large gatherings such as political rallies or Black Lives Matter protests, which have the potential for large offsetting community effects through avoidance behaviors, may not generalize to all indoor events.

# Highlights of CHEPS 2020-21 Seminar Series

During the 2020 Fall semester, CHEPS hosted 15 economists presenting scholarly research on a variety of sub-fields including labor, health, environmental, and family economics. These external speakers come from a variety of different research universities including the University of Chicago, Texas A&M University, Cornell University, University of California, Los Angeles, Wake Forest University, University of California, Davis, Montana State University, and Vanderbilt University.

The weekly seminars were attended by CHEPS affiliates, professors across disciplines, and both undergraduate and graduate students. The virtual nature of the seminars allowed students and academics from institutions nationwide to attend, including a number of co-authors and leading scholars in their fields. Additionally, the seminars served to introduce students to a variety of research interests and allowed professors affiliated with CHEPS to network with faculty from other universities.

Importantly, presenters met with CHEPS affiliates in small groups sessions to discuss their research and academic experience. Several invited speakers discussed the relative quality of various economics and public policy PhD programs with students and gave advice on how to stand out among the growing fields of applicants and how to find the best match for their own interests. Affiliated PhD students were also given the opportunity to meet with seminar speakers to discuss their current and future research and solicit advice on how to best progress through their programs. Despite the barriers that the Coronavirus pandemic has created, the Fall 2020 Seminar Series offered an invaluable experience for both faculty and students to be exposed to a number of novel research projects; a few of the seminars are outlined below.



At the beginning of September, Professor Justin Gallagher from Montana State University presented his paper titled "Weathering an Unexpected Financial Shock: Cash Grants, Household Finance & Business Survival," co-authored with Daniel Hartley and Shawn Rohlin. In this paper, Dr. Gallagher and his co-authors analyze the financial impacts of federal cash grants provided to victims of natural disasters. Dr. Gallagher and his team use data from 34 tornadoes and review the effects on businesses and individual credit card balances in census blocks impacted by a tornado and receiving federal assistance.



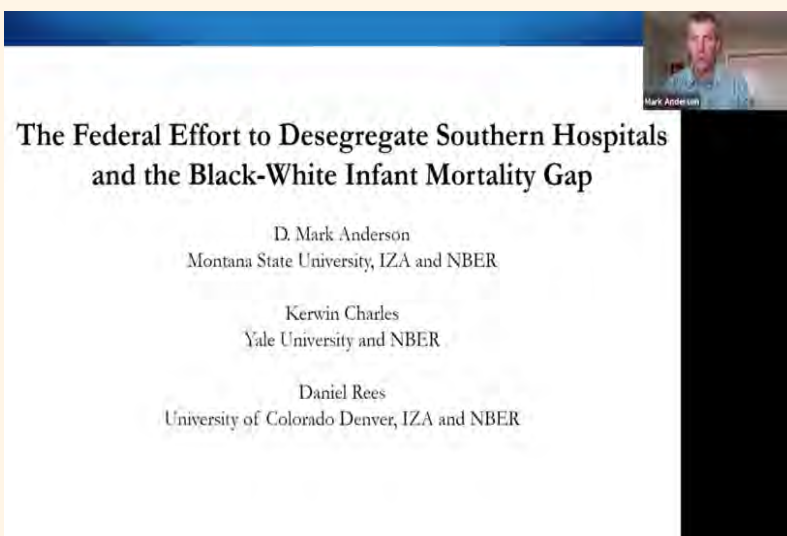
The authors specify a triple difference model that introduces distance buffers from the center of the tornado's path, allowing for financial impact analysis at various levels of destruction. The paper concludes that federal cash grants are useful in reducing credit card liability in localities hit by a tornado. In addition, the author's also find that federal grants reduce the unemployment rate and increase business survivability post natural disaster. This research demonstrates the importance of knowing where, when, and how to implement improvements to federal disaster relief policy.



Mark Hoekstra from Texas A&M presented a working paper titled, "Does Race Matter for Police Use of Force? Evidence from 911 Calls." Dr. Hoekstra and his coauthor, CarlyWill Sloan, investigated the role of race in police use of force. While it is often difficult to identify causal effects in these situations, this paper addressed these problems by using data on officers dispatched to over

two million 911 calls in two cities, neither of which allows for discretion in the dispatch process. Dr. Hoekstra and his coauthor used location-by-time fixed effects to show that white officers use force 60 percent more on average than black officers. In addition, they found white officers are five times more likely than black officers to use gun force in predominantly black neighborhoods.

In another seminar, Mark Anderson from Montana State University presented his new working paper "The Federal Effort to Desegregate Southern Hospitals and the Black-White Infant Mortality Gap." This study explores the segregated rural south, where in 1966, Southern hospitals were barred from participating in the Medicare program unless they discontinued their long-standing practice of racial segregation. Dr. Anderson and his co-authors use



data from 5 Deep South states and find that gaining access to an ostensibly integrated hospital had no effect on the black-white infant mortality gap, although it discouraged small numbers of black mothers from giving birth at home attended by a midwife. These results are consistent with descriptions of the federal hospital desegregation campaign as producing only cosmetic changes and illustrate the limits of anti-discrimination policies imposed on those who wish not to cooperate.

Professor Emily Owens of the University of California, Irvine presented her paper titled “How Valuable are Civil Liberties? Evidence from Gang Injunctions and Housing Prices in Southern California.” In this study, she and her co-authors examined a “proactive policing strategy” utilized in Southern California called a gang injunction. This type of injunction is similar to a restraining order against named and unnamed suspected gang members, which increases police ability to arrest suspected gang members in designated safety zones for a set of legally defined behaviors identified as precursors to crime. Dr. Owens’ team used home values in and around these safety zones over time as a measure of willingness to pay and found that these policies may actually reduce individuals’ desire to live in these proactively policed areas.

During the 2021 Spring semester, CHEPS hosted 14 experts presented on a range of topics including education, health, crime, and public economics. These external speakers came from a diverse mix of institutional backgrounds including Vanderbilt University, the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, University of Wisconsin – Madison, University of Pennsylvania, and the White House Council of Economic Advisors.



One of the highlights of the CHEPS seminar series this year included rising star Andrew Goodman-Bacon, economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. He presented his working paper titled “(Cash) Welfare Under (American) Federalism,” which discussed U.S. social safety net programs. Safety net programs owe their success to 20th Century US federal expansion, however, because states and localities operated their own patchwork of programs, federal spending may not translate into higher benefits or eligibility. Goodman-Bacon’s papers use newly entered data on participation and spending in cash welfare programs to estimate the effect of federal welfare expansions on the historical development of the size and scope of the American safety net. Reforms from the 1950s to the 1970s show that state programs shrink in response to new federally financed programs and do not

respond to more generous federal incentives. The results of this intriguing paper speak not only to the history of welfare in the US, but also to the economic models of fiscal federalism and to the economic incidence of federal welfare spending.



During his seminar, Aaron Chalfin, Assistant Professor of Criminology at the University of Pennsylvania, presented a paper on the race-specific impacts of increased police force sizes. This work expands on the growing literature related to crime and policing, which has gained increased public attention in the wake of Black Lives Matter protests and increased social activism present in recent years. Chalfin and his co-authors find that the hiring of one additional officer is associated with abating up to 0.1 homicides, suggesting that investment in police manpower can actually save a life at a cost far lower than the generally accepted value of a statistical life. They also find that increased manpower is associated with higher arrest rates for lower-level arrests, such as drug and alcohol-related violations, and effects suggest that the increases in these types of arrests are significantly larger for black Americans.

In addition, Anita Mukherjee from University of Wisconsin, Madison joined the seminar to present her paper “Abandoned Retirement Savings,” coauthored with Lucas Goodman and Shanthi Ramnath. The U.S. retirement savings environment requires individuals to keep track of multiple savings accounts accumulated over their working lives, which often results in account abandonment. This can be due to forgetting or hassle costs that likely increase with the age of these accounts. Dr. Mukherjee and her coauthors explore this growing issue using tax data on Individual Retirement Accounts. They find that in 2017, 2.7% of 72.5 year-old account-holders abandoned a total of \$790 million, with the median abandoned account valued at \$5,400. Using account thresholds for automatic rollover IRAs, Dr. Mukherjee and her coauthors implement a regression discontinuity design to estimate that abandonment is 10 times higher in default plans. This research highlights the need for policymakers to consider this issue and the tradeoffs that frictions in retirement account consolidations create, as abandonment can result in suboptimal retirement consumption or decreased retirement saving.



Another paper presented in the seminar series was “Dying to Work: Effects of Unemployment Insurance on Health.” In this paper, Dr. Analisa Packham from Vanderbilt University and coauthor Dr. Alexander Ahammer from Johannes Kepler University, Linz examine gender and treatment effect heterogeneity from increases in unemployment insurance benefits. This paper is particularly





relevant to policy formation in a post-COVID context as the economic impact of unemployment insurance increases and extensions in the United States is still being determined. Overall Packham and Ahammer find that benefit increases are generally more beneficial for female workers and can actually be harmful for male workers. Health outcomes for heart attacks and strokes are worse for men as unemployment insurance benefits are increased. Meanwhile, women see reductions in these cardiac instances, in addition to reductions in prescriptions for antidepressants and opioids. Understanding the heterogeneous effects of these types of

benefit programs is important in the current climate. Research analyzing these outcomes on a granular level can better inform policy responses moving forward. This is particularly critical in an environment shaped by a pandemic with increases in both unemployment claims and demand for medical facilities.

Finally, Richard Burkhauser, Cornell University Professor Emeritus, delivered a seminar in which he discussed his time as an Economist on President Trump's Council of Economic Advisers (CEA). He discussed how the CEA is organized and the policy work in which he was engaged during the Trump Years. He also answered questions about how economists' advice was viewed during those years. In addition, Dr. Burkhauser presented new research that explores whether President Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty" was successful. His work shed new light on poverty measurement and how we should judge the effectiveness of past Federal anti-poverty efforts.



# CENTER FOR HEALTH ECONOMICS & POLICY STUDIES

## FALL 2020 RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES

Co-Sponsored by SDSU School of Public Health



SAN DIEGO STATE  
UNIVERSITY

College of Arts & Letters

Thursdays 3:30 PM - 4:45PM

Virtual via Zoom (<https://SDSU.zoom.us/j/4281744319>)



August 27

**Marianne Bitler**

University of California-Davis

*"Marriage Markets and Family Formation:  
The Role of the Vietnam Draft"*



October 22

**Valerie Bostwick**

Kansas State University

*"Driving, Dropouts, and Drive-throughs:  
Mobility Restrictions and Teen Outcomes"*

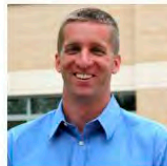


September 3

**Justin Gallagher**

Montana State University

*"Weathering an Unexpected Financial Shock: Cash  
Grants, Household Finance & Business Survival"*

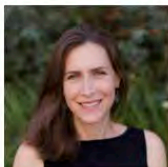


October 29

**Mark Hoekstra**

Texas A&M University

*"Does Race Matter for Police Use of Force?  
Evidence from 911 Calls"*



September 10

**Emily Owens**

University of California-Irvine

*"How Valuable are Civil Liberties? Evidence from Gang  
Injunctions and Housing prices in Southern California"*



November 5

**Christopher Ruhm**

University of Virginia

*"Mortality Trends Across Education  
Quartiles"*

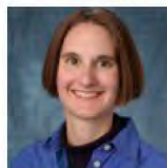


September 17

**Leah Lakdawala**

Wake Forest University

*"The Dynamic Impact of Internet Access on  
Student Learning"*



November 19

**Terra McKinnish**

University of Colorado Boulder

*"Male Wage Inequality and Characteristics  
of 'Early Mover' Marriages"*



September 24

**Joshua Gottlieb**

University of Chicago

*"The Rise of Healthcare Jobs"*



December 3

**Michael Lovenheim**

Cornell University

*"Covid-19 and Vaping"*



October 1

**Mark Anderson**

Montana State University

*"Hospital Desegregation and Infant Mortality  
in the South"*

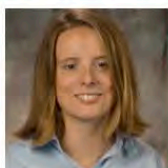


December 10

**Manisha Shah**

University of California-Los Angeles

*"Including Males: Improving Sexual and  
Reproductive Health for Female Adolescents"*



October 15

**Heather Royer**

University of California-Santa Barbara

*"Is Parental Leave Costly for Firms and  
Coworkers?"*

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If you have any questions or feedback, contact Samuel Safford  
at [safford.samuel@gmail.com](mailto:safford.samuel@gmail.com)



# CENTER FOR HEALTH ECONOMICS & POLICY STUDIES

## SPRING 2021 RESEARCH SEMINAR SERIES

Co-Sponsored by SDSU School of Public Health

Thursdays 3:30 PM - 4:45PM

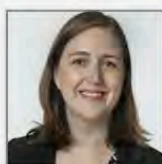
Virtual via Zoom (<https://SDSU.zoom.us/j/4281744319>)



SAN DIEGO STATE  
UNIVERSITY



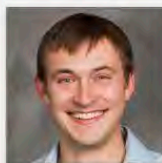
**January 28**  
**Analisa Packham**  
Vanderbilt University  
*Health Economics*



**February 4**  
**Claudia Persico**  
American University  
*Environmental Economics and  
Health Economics*



**February 11**  
**Lauren Hoehn-Velasco**  
Georgia State University  
*Labor Economics and  
Economic Demography*



**February 18**  
**Andrew Goodman-Bacon**  
Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis  
*Public Economics and  
Economic History*



**February 25**  
**Anita Mukherjee**  
University of Wisconsin - Madison  
*Health Economics and  
Law & Economics*

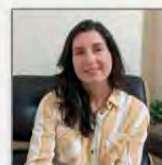


**March 4**  
**Chloe East**  
University of Colorado - Denver  
*Public Economics*

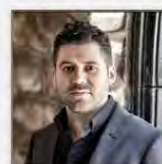


**March 11**  
**Dennis Guignet**  
Appalachian State University  
*Environmental Economics*

**March 18**  
**Viviane Sanfelice**  
Temple University  
*Development Economics and  
Public Economics*



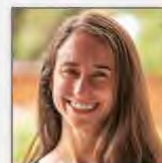
**March 25**  
**Aaron Chalfin**  
University of Pennsylvania  
*Economics of Crime*



**April 1**  
**Richard Burkhauser**  
University of Texas - Austin  
*Labor Economics and  
Economics of Aging*



**April 8**  
**Briana Ballis**  
University of California - Merced  
*Labor Economics and  
Public Economics*



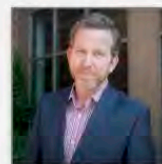
**April 22**  
**Damon Clark**  
University of California - Irvine  
*Economics of Education*



**April 29**  
**Jacob Vigdor**  
University of Washington  
*Public Economics and  
Labor Economics*



**May 6**  
**Glen Waddell**  
University of Oregon  
*Health Economics and  
Labor Economics*



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## CENTER FOR HEALTH ECONOMICS & POLICY STUDIES

FALL 2021 SEMINAR SERIES  
THURSDAYS 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM  
FINCH CONFERENCE ROOM (AL 660)



SAN DIEGO STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
College of Arts & Letters



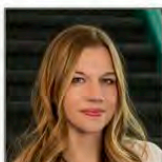
August 26  
**David Powell**  
RAND Corporation  
*Health Economics and  
Public Finance*

October 14  
**Amanda Agan**  
Rutgers University  
*Economics of Crime*



September 2  
**Rachel Heath**  
University of Washington  
*Development Economics and  
Labor Economics*

October 21  
**Marianne Page**  
University of California, Davis  
*Labor Economics*



September 16  
**Jessamyn Schaller**  
Claremont McKenna College  
*Labor Economics*

October 28  
**David Figlio**  
Northwestern University  
*Economics of Education*



September 23  
**Gordon Dahl**  
University of California, San Diego  
*Labor Economics*

November 4  
**Kosali Simon**  
Indiana University  
*Health Economics*



September 30  
**Lucie Schmidt**  
Williams College  
*Labor Economics and  
Health Economics*

November 18  
**Patrick Button**  
Tulane University  
*Labor Economics*




October 7  
**William Olney**  
University of Hawaii  
*International Economics and  
Labor Economics*

December 2  
**Bree Lang**  
University of California, Riverside  
*Urban Economics*



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# Conferences Featuring CHEPS Research

Despite the Coronavirus pandemic causing major shifts in everyone's personal and work life routines, CHEPS affiliates were still able to present working papers at a number of annual research conferences through virtual means. Conferences like APPAM, SEA, and EEA are important parts of the research process, providing academics with the opportunity to present working papers and in turn receive valuable feedback from prominent scholars.



The 42nd Annual Fall Research Conference for the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) took place in mid-November 2021. Here, scholars from across the country gathered on zoom to share groundbreaking policy-relevant research. CHEPS Director Joseph J. Sabia was among these scholars. Sabia presented his NBER working paper “Did the War on Terror Ignite an Opioid Epidemic?” joint with Resul Cesur (University of Connecticut) and David Bradford (University of Georgia). The authors exploit a natural experiment in overseas deployment assignments to estimate the causal impact of combat deployments on opioid abuse. They find that combat service leads to a significant risk of prescription painkiller abuse and heroin use among servicemembers.



The following week, the Southern Economic Association (SEA) virtually held their 90th Annual Meetings. CHEPS post-doctoral fellow Drew McNichols attended to present not one, but two recent papers. The first paper, “Information and the Persistence of the Gender Wage Gap; Early Evidence from California's Salary History Ban” is co-authored with Benjamin Hansen (University of Oregon). This paper evaluates the effectiveness of California's salary history ban, a policy intended to close the gender wage gap. The second paper Drew presented, “Do State Tobacco 21 Laws Work?” is co-authored with Calvin Bryan (Colorado State University), Benjamin Hansen (University of Oregon), and Joseph J. Sabia. This paper evaluates the impact of policies that regulate the purchase age of tobacco products on teen smoking.



The next conference in this season of meetings was the 2021 Annual Allied Social Science Associations (ASSA) Meetings. Here, CHEPS Director Joseph J. Sabia was able to present one of the center's spotlight papers, titled "Black Lives Matter Protests, Social Distancing, and COVID-19." This work, joint with Dhaval Dave (Bentley University), Andrew Friedson (University of Colorado Denver), Kyutaro Matsuzawa (University of Oregon), and Sam Safford (San Diego State University), finds that the waves of Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020 had little to no effect on

COVID-19 transmission, largely due to the net increase in stay-at-home behavior surrounding the events. As one of the larger annual meetings in the field of economics, this was a great opportunity to gain some exposure for the center and its work.

CHEPS' largest presence occurred at the 47th annual research conference for the Eastern Economic Association (EEA) in late February 2021, where four CHEPS affiliates presented work. As the meetings were pushed online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it seemed only fitting for affiliates to present a handful of the Center's cutting edge COVID-19 related research. Drew McNichols, a post-doctoral fellow at CHEPS, kicked off the weekend by presenting work on the 2020 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally and its effect on COVID-19 transmission. This work, joint with Dhaval Dave (Bentley University), Andrew Friedson (University of Colorado Denver), and Joseph J. Sabia, finds that the rally increased COVID-19 cases not only in the hosting county, but in out-of-state counties that saw high levels of attendance.

More COVID-19 work was discussed in a session chaired by Dr. Sabia, where Kyutaro Matsuzawa and Sam Safford presented recent CHEPS work. Kyu Matsuzawa, CHEPS PhD affiliate at the University of Oregon, presented work analyzing differences in the effects of adoption and termination of COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders, joint with Joseph J. Sabia, Dhaval Dave (Bentley University), Andrew Friedson (University of Colorado Denver), and post-doctoral fellow Drew McNichols. Safford, a CHEPS pre-doctoral fellow, presented work on the effect of Black Lives Matter protests and related social distancing on COVID-19 transmission, joint with Joseph J. Sabia, Andrew Friedson (University of Colorado Denver), Dhaval Dave (Bentley University), and Kyutaro Matsuzawa (University of Oregon), making it the paper's second conference appearance of the year. Diverging from the pandemic-related research, Alicia Marquez, MA affiliate, presented joint work with Joseph J Sabia on the impact of state anti-bullying laws on youth risky health behaviors. The authors find that while anti-bullying laws were effective in reducing bullying on school property, the effects did not spillover into risky health behaviors such as drinking, smoking, or risky sex.

All in all, the 2020-2021 conference lineups were a great opportunity for scholars and students alike to virtually gather and discuss cutting-edge research that emerged from a difficult year.



# Interviews with Research Fellows



## **Drew McNichols** **CHEPS Postdoctoral Fellow, 2019-21**

### **What were some of the highlights of your research accomplishments while a Postdoctoral Fellow at CHEPS?**

One of the biggest highlights was being part of a team that produced a vast amount of research related to the pandemic in such a short amount of time. The speed at which we were able to go from working paper to accepted publication was remarkable. My greatest accomplishment during the postdoc was our first COVID paper “Shelter-in-Place Orders and Public Health:

Evidence from California During the COVID-19 Pandemic” which is now published in the Journal of Policy Analysis and Management. This paper sparked the beginning of the center’s comparative advantage in producing COVID related research.

### **What did you enjoy most about your work with mentoring the Center’s MA students?**

I enjoyed the several instances when MA students decided to make the research their own and really took a deep dive into the research project they were working on. It made me proud as a mentor to be an integral part of the development of their curiosity and econometric skill set.

### **Where will you be working next year and what will your job entail?**

I’ll be working for Amazon in the devices and services team. I was hired as a reduced form causal inference economist. I’ll be working with rich user level data to inform future decisions made by the team.

### **What advice do you have for future senior scholars that may work at the Center?**

The center offers a rich set of networking opportunities and data resources. Take advantage of as many of these opportunities as you can.



## **Alicia Marquez**

### **CHEPS MA Affiliate, 2018-21**



#### **What motivated you to become involved as a researcher with the Center for Health Economics & Policy Studies?**

I first became aware of the Center when I enrolled in Dr. Sabia's course in Law and Economics during my junior year of undergraduate. Here, I learned about the weekly seminar series, which was my first real introduction to applied microeconomic research. I was unsure about my steps after graduation and thought the Center would provide me with the exposure necessary to determine if a career in economics was for me. It must have worked, as I began working for the Center during the start of my senior year and am now heading off to a PhD program!

#### **What are the most important skills you acquired?**

During my time in CHEPS, I learned valuable technical skills that will aid me in my future research. From Stata bootcamp your first semester to additional sessions with advanced researchers on the newest econometric tools, students are afforded numerous opportunities to build technical building blocks that are necessary to immediately jump into research. These are skills that will allow for an easier transition to independent research during my PhD.

#### **What advice do you have for future CHEPS graduate affiliates?**

My advice would be to take full advantage of the resources available to you at CHEPS. Ask questions during seminars. Pick speakers' brains about their experiences in the field. Listen to the hiccups in your peers' projects and learn from them like they were your own. There are so many opportunities to learn and grow as a researcher – don't waste them!

#### **Which PhD program will you be attending and why did you choose it?**

I will be attending the Policy Analysis and Management PhD program at Cornell University. I chose this program because of its interdisciplinary nature, with strong faculty in fields ranging from health economics to demography to environmental economics. The program seems like a great fit for my interests, and I am excited to begin classes soon.

#### **How did CHEPS help you in your endeavor to be accepted to a PhD?**

CHEPS prepared me for the PhD application process in a few ways. It provided me with research experience to boost my resume and make my application stand out. I was also able to learn from the cohorts above me and speak with them about what they did and/or would have done differently. Lastly, visiting speakers often gave advice on the application process through the perspective of an admissions committee. Together, these made the process a lot less intimidating and aided in my success in being accepted to a program.

## **Cameron Milani**

### **CHEPS MA Affiliate, 2019-21**



#### **What motivated you to become involved as a researcher with the Center for Health Economics & Policy Studies?**

When I was applying to master's programs, I knew I wanted to further my education by getting a PhD. When I learned about the Center for Health Economics & Policy Studies, I felt it would be the perfect opportunity for me to develop skills that would prepare me for PhD programs. Specifically, I knew that the close guidance I would receive from Dr. Sabia, the opportunity to immerse myself in relevant research, and the possibility of developing a research agenda would be invaluable for my future aspirations.

#### **What are the most important skills you acquired?**

I learned about the care and attention to detail needed to collect data-- inaccuracies in this regard make every subsequent step flawed. I learned, in practice, a number of model specifications and when it is appropriate to use each. Furthermore, I learned the importance of being able to clearly communicate the progress being made and any questions that are emerging.

#### **What advice do you have for future CHEPS graduate affiliates?**

I would encourage future CHEP graduate affiliates to take full advantage of the opportunity before them. Specifically, everyone should feel comfortable asking Dr. Sabia questions, he is always willing to help; they should make sure to foster close friendships with their peers; and come prepared when meeting with a guest speaker; those are special opportunities to learn from prominent researchers from across the nation.

#### **Which PhD program will you be attending and why did you choose it?**

I will be attending Claremont Graduate University in the fall. The program will provide me with special opportunities to further my research abilities, deepen my knowledge of relevant theories, and learn from other top scholars in the field.

#### **How did CHEPS help you in your endeavor to be accepted to a PhD?**

CHEPS played a crucial role in getting accepted to a PhD program. Without the research experience CHEPS provided me with, as well as the relationship I developed with Dr. Sabia, it's unlikely I would be where I am.



## **Sam Safford**

### **CHEPS MA Affiliate and Chief-of-Staff, 2018-21**



#### **What motivated you to become involved as a researcher with the Center for Health Economics & Policy Studies?**

I entered the MA program with only a vague sense of what conducting academic research in economics entailed. My first week, I attended the first seminar in the CHEPS Fall 2018 series by Dr. Dean Lillard. It was engaging, and I enjoyed hearing the faculty and other graduate students asking questions and engaging in conversation about his paper. I continued to attend the seminars and saw how my peers who were already CHEPS fellows were getting applied experience. I knew I wanted the same and was thrilled when Dr. Sabia accepted me as a Research Assistant in the spring.

#### **What are the most important skills you acquired?**

In addition to the advanced coding and data collection work that I have been able to conduct at CHEPS, my work on various projects has built a greater understanding and intuition of how to approach questions, both in the research process and outside of academia. When combined, these skills have constructed a solid foundation on which to pursue further independent and collaborative research.

#### **What advice do you have for future CHEPS graduate affiliates?**

I would tell them to foster friendships with their peers, as they will be their companions through projects, finals, presentations, and are all potential future co-authors. I would also tell them to take advantage of the unique experience we are offered by having access to Dr. Sabia, who has an amazing amount of experience and knowledge of the research process and applied microeconomics.

#### **Which PhD program will you be attending and why did you choose it?**

I will be attending Michigan State University's PhD program in Sociology beginning this fall. The faculty in the department were engaging, and many of their research agendas align very well with my own. Additionally, I will have the opportunity to work with Dr. Cathy Liu as a Research Assistant on a project funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), an opportunity that many PhD students are not afforded. I am excited to attend MSU – I just need to buy a very good coat!

#### **How did CHEPS help you in your endeavor to be accepted to a PhD?**

In addition to providing me with invaluable resources that have served to build my ability to conduct research, CHEPS and Dr. Sabia have offered me the opportunity to co-author on papers on a number of papers on relevant, important topics. This applied research experience was important in helping fill any other gaps in my application.

# Voices of CHEPS Alumni

## Kyu Matsuzawa



**What PhD program are you attending, and how did you decide that the program was a good fit for you?**

I am attending the University of Oregon for my PhD in Economics. I decided to go to this program because I'm interested in applied microeconomics, and the program has a strong group of applied microeconomic researchers who I am interested in working with.

**What core/field courses have you enjoyed most so far?**

I enjoyed my third quarter econometrics course. The main focus of the course was causal inference, which I am really interested in and am planning on focusing my dissertation on. In addition, I was able to learn more about coding in R, a programming software that I enjoy working with.

**What research do you intend to pursue as part of your dissertation?**

I'm not 100% certain yet, but broadly speaking, I am interested in health economics. Within the field, there are three major questions I would want to focus on. First, I want to examine why there are differences in health behaviors across individuals. Second, I want to examine how people's health behaviors change because of government intervention and policy reform. Finally, I want to examine the economic consequences of specific health behaviors.

**What advice do you have for current MA students here at SDSU who are interested in applying to a PhD program?**

I would recommend taking as many economics, math, and statistics courses as possible, and to put as much effort as you can into them. Your first year PhD program will be difficult. However, the materials you will learn in your MA program at SDSU will definitely help you better understand your first-year coursework.

**Looking back, what aspect of your time at CHEPS helped you most in your journey to a PhD program?**

Doing research and writing papers with Dr. Sabia helped me most in my journey to a PhD program. This process made me realize that I really enjoy doing research and gaining new understandings, and that I want to pursue my PhD to become a researcher. I believe this ultimate goal helped me get through the hardest times during the first year of my PhD program.

## Toshio Ferrazares



### **What PhD program are you attending, and how did you decide that the program was a good fit for you?**

I am currently in the 2nd year of my economics PhD program at the University of California, Santa Barbara. UCSB's emphasis on applied topics made the program a great fit for me. There are several professors that work on topics in health, education, and applied econometrics.

### **What core or field courses have you enjoyed most so far?**

My favorite course has been one taught by Professor Clément de Chaisemartin on differences in differences. Since Clément is a leading scholar on applied econometric methods, we were able to take a deep dive into cutting edge econometric techniques. Since difference in differences is one of the leading methods for applied economists, this class was vital in developing my applied skills.

### **What research do you intend to pursue as part of your dissertation?**

My current work is exploring police body-worn cameras, a technology that is intended to increase the transparency of police officers' actions. These devices have made a rapid expansion across police departments in recent years. However, researchers have not fully explored how effective these devices are at improving officer-civilian interactions and reducing officer-civilian violence. This is an area where I believe I can make a substantial contribution. My work at CHEPS was immensely beneficial for this project as I was able to use the tools that I picked up at SDSU to get a head start on this project.

### **What advice do you have for current MA students here at SDSU who are interested in applying to a PhD program?**

My advice would be to take every opportunity you can to expose yourself to more research. Read papers, follow NBER groups, and attend as many seminars as you can. Every bit of exposure will help, even if it is in fields that are not your first choice.

### **Looking back, what aspect of your time at CHEPS helped you most in your journey to a PhD program?**

The exposure to so many types of economic research was the most important thing for me. The weekly seminars that we held, the conferences that we were able to attend across the country, and the constant exposure to new research ideas and methods was immensely beneficial to me as a young scholar. Seeing how many diverse topics that researchers were able to pursue opened up many opportunities for me to explore and helped me get started on research early and on topics that I find interesting.



## Tam Nguyen



### **What PhD program are you attending, and how did you decide that the program was a good fit for you?**

I am working on my PhD in Economics at University of New Hampshire. When checking out a PhD program, I looked at its faculty and their research interests, the department's placement record, and opportunities for financial support.

### **What core or field courses have you enjoyed most so far?**

I really enjoyed the Health Economics sequence offered at UNH. The sequence consists of 2 field courses in Health Economics covering both economic theories and empirical analyses of various topics in markets of health insurance, the U.S. health system, and up-to-date health-related issues such as childhood obesity and rising health care costs. Students who take this sequence are also required to take an additional related course from an outside department. I picked Epidemiology. I really enjoy learning to examine similar topics from a different perspective. After the sequence, I declared Health Economics as my major field.

### **What research do you intend to pursue as part of your dissertation?**

My thesis consists of three essays on the effects of public policy on vulnerable populations. The first chapter examines the unintended consequence of laws that ban criminal-history questions on initial job applications on crime. The second paper studies state Medicaid payment reforms in maternal care and their impact on maternal as well as infant health outcomes. The final paper examines the effect of insurance nondiscrimination laws on health outcomes of sexual minorities in the U.S.

### **What advice do you have for current MA students here at SDSU who are interested in applying to a PhD program?**

Connect with your professors! Visit them during their office hours and talk to them about your interest in pursuing a PhD. If possible, ask if you can do research with them.

### **Looking back, what aspect of your time at CHEPS helped you most in your journey to a PhD program?**

Doing research with Professor Sabia during my years at SDSU has helped me tremendously during my PhD program. My research experience not only helped me get into the program but also gave me a head start at UNH. And I'm sure the knowledge and skills I've learned here will continue to benefit me in my research career as a health economist.

## Alex Chesney

### **What PhD program are you attending, and how did you decide that the program was a good fit for you?**

I am entering my 3rd year in a PhD program in Economics at the University of California, Davis. UCD was a great fit for me for a few reasons. First, I found an incredible advisor and mentor with Professor Scott Carrell. Second, I found all the faculty and graduate students extremely welcoming and collegial. Finally, Northern California offers plenty of amenities that make the PhD experience more appealing. Between the skiing in Lake Tahoe and the attractions found in California's Capitol, there are plenty of opportunities to decompress from the stress of demanding coursework and research.



### **What core or field courses have you enjoyed most so far?**

I have really enjoyed all my field courses in Labor, Public, and Econometrics. Public Economics covered a variety of topics including Means-Tested Transfer Programs and the Economics of Education. A lot of my research involves peer effects and teacher value-added, so this was an engaging course. The Econometrics elective I took was a survey course in Machine Learning and Bayesian Econometrics, and was especially useful in demystifying some of the newer econometric techniques used by both Economists and other researchers in the social sciences.

### **What research do you intend to pursue as part of your dissertation?**

My research agenda mostly revolves around studying active-duty military service members and how specific policies impact their education investment decisions and other forms of human capital development. I am working on multiple papers related to these issues.

### **What advice do you have for current MA students here at SDSU who are interested in applying to a PhD program?**

First, study hard and take coursework at SDSU that will increase your familiarity with advanced mathematics and statistics. Second, take the GRE very seriously. Treat it like the most important exam of your academic career (until your comprehensive exams!). Finally, start researching early! Even if you don't plan on attending a PhD program immediately after SDSU (like me), try to stay active in the literature and find opportunities to write and get a few publications completed.

### **Looking back, what aspect of your time at CHEPS helped you most in your journey to a PhD program?**

Learning about research from Dr. Sabia was probably the most important aspect of my time at SDSU in preparing me for a PhD program. A doctorate program is built around your capacity to produce quality work that pushes the research frontier, nothing else. If you get the "research-bug" early like me, then you can hit the floor running when you arrive at your final PhD destination.

## Gokhan Kumpas



### **Which University did you attend for your PhD program in Economics and what were your favorite courses?**

I got my PhD from University of New Hampshire. My favorite class was health economics with Dr. Reagan Baughman, and environmental economics with Dr. Ju-Chin Huang.

### **On what topics did your dissertation focus?**

My dissertation focuses on The Spillover Effects of Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Violence Policies.

### **How did your affiliation with CHEPS help you in your development?**

With the help of the Center for Health Economics and Policy Studies I grew as a doctoral researcher, I worked on multiple projects from beginning to their publications, trained to use cutting edge methods and participated several regional and national conferences which helped me develop my own network and improved my presentation skills. I am indebted to Dr. Sabia and CHEPS for my professional development as a PhD economics.

### **Now that you are officially Dr. Kumpas, where will your career next take you?**

I have accepted a research associate position at the University of Bath in United Kingdom, where I will continue to build my research portfolio before seeking a tenure track position in the United States.



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# CHEPS Graduate Student Bios

## Second Year MA Students



### Eric Thomas

Eric Thomas received his BS in economics and BA in political science from The University of the Pacific in 2017. After graduation, he worked in private consulting before deciding to pursue further graduate studies in Economics at SDSU. His research interests include trade, public policy, and financial economics. He intends on pursuing a PhD in economics upon completing the master's program.

### Matt Braaksma

After graduating from Eastern Washington University with a BA in Accounting and a minor in Economics, Matt worked as a local government auditor and taught ESL abroad before deciding to pursue a MA in Economics at San Diego State University. Upon completion of the MA program, he hopes to continue to a PhD program in Economics. His research interests primarily include environmental economics, development economics, and public policy.



### Rebecca Margolit

Rebecca Margolit graduated from the University of California, Davis in 2015 with a BS in managerial economics and a minor in communications. Directly following, she worked for several years as a Senior Disability Benefits Specialist at Unum in Glendale, CA, where she gained an in-depth knowledge of the insurance industry and risk management. Now, she is a second-year student in the SDSU Economics MA program. She has many interests including health economics and policy, environmental economics, and econometrics.

She hopes to eventually pursue a PhD in economics to conduct research to improve health outcomes of those with disabilities.

## **Russell Leonard**

Russell Leonard received his BA in Philosophy (cum laude) and Economics from the University of Colorado-Boulder in 2019. Upon graduation, he spent time as a tax policy analyst for the Colorado Office of the State Auditor, where he developed a particular fondness for policy research. He then turned to SDSU to develop his empirical skills and theoretical background, where he is now a second year MA candidate. Upon completing his MA, Russ hopes to pursue a PhD in Economics or Public Policy. His research interests include public policy, environmental and natural resource economics, and their overlaps in the economics of transportation and of inequality and discrimination; in his spare time, he enjoys cooking and fishing.



## **Incoming First Year MA Students**

### **Kim Nguyen**



Kim Nguyen obtained her BS in Marketing and a minor in Accounting from San Diego State University in 2020. She has worked with various non-profit businesses to develop marketing plans, which led her to continue her education in the Economics Graduate Program back at SDSU. Her research topics of interest include the economics of education and behavioral economics. Once completed with her MA in Economics, she intends to pursue a doctorate to go into academia and teach students while researching more on her topics of interest.

### **Isaac Ochoa**

Isaac Ochoa received his BA in Economics with an emphasis in Public Policy from San Diego State University in 2021. He is currently pursuing his MA in Economics at San Diego State University. After his completion of the MA program at SDSU, he plans to attain a PhD in Economics. Some of his interests include Urban Economics, Public Policy, and Housing Markets.





### **Cooper Smiley**

Cooper Smiley graduated from San Diego State University in 2021 with a BA in Economics. He is currently pursuing an MA in Economics at SDSU. His interests include developmental, health, and labor economics.

### **Alex Welton**

Alex Welton graduated from California State University Sacramento in 2019 with a BA in Economics. He is continuing his education at SDSU by joining the MA in Economics program. After completion of the MA program, he hopes to pursue a PhD in Economics. His interests include Behavioral Economics, Game Theory, Resource Economics, Energy Economics, and Public Policy.



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## **CHEPS PhD Affiliates** *(Claremont Graduate University)*



### **Abdullah Alswelh**

Abdullah Alswelh is a fourth-year PhD student in Economics at Claremont Graduate University (CGU). Before coming to CGU, he obtained his BA in Economics from King Saud University, Saudi Arabia, and his MA in Economics from the University of Missouri Kansas City. Abdullah's research interests lie in the realm of applied microeconomics, economic policy, and Labor economics. Presently, he is working with Dr. Sabia on two projects: "Are Recreational Marijuana Laws a Gateway to Hard Drug Use and Crime" and "Seat Belt Laws and Traffic Fatalities."

### **Fawaz Alotaibi**

Fawaz Alotaibi a fourth-year PhD student at Claremont Graduate University in the Economics department. He graduated from King Saud University, Saudi Arabia, with a bachelor's degree in Economics, and a master's degree from University of Missouri Kansas City in Economics. His research focuses on applied microeconomics and labor economics. Currently, Fawaz is working on "Are Recreational Marijuana Laws a Gateway to Hard Drug Use and Crime" and "Seat Belt Laws and Traffic Fatalities" with Professor Joseph J. Sabia.





## PhD-Bound CHEPS Affiliates



### Alicia Marquez

Alicia Marquez received her BS in Environmental Sciences in 2019 and her MA in Economics in 2021, both from San Diego State University. She is currently an incoming first-year graduate student in the Policy Analysis and Management program at Cornell University. Alicia is interested in a variety of applied microeconomic research fields, including health and environmental economics.

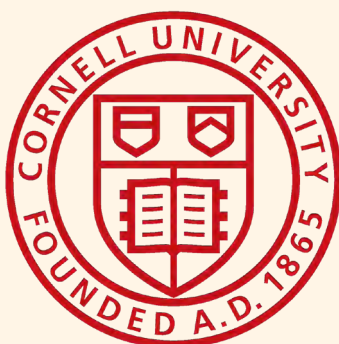
### Cameron Milani

Cameron Milani received his BA in economics from the University of California, Los Angeles, and his MA in economics from San Diego State University. His interests include labor economics, economic development, and housing markets. He will be attending Claremont Graduate University's PhD program in economics this coming fall.



### Sam Safford

Sam Safford received their BA in economics in 2018 from California State University, Los Angeles, and their MA in Economics in 2020 from San Diego State University. They are currently an incoming first-year PhD student in the Department of Sociology at Michigan State University. Sam is interested in studying inequalities in health and medicine among LGBTQ+ populations, as well as social policy and demography.



Claremont  
Graduate  
University



## Zach Fone



Zach is an applied microeconomist who began a postdoctoral position in the Initiative for Regulation and Applied Economic Analysis (IRAEA) at Montana State University last July, after completing a PhD in Economics at the University of New Hampshire in May 2020. This past year, Zach continued with ongoing research projects, yielding a revise and resubmit and two other papers that are under review. He also began a few new projects, including research into the externalities of mega-sporting events, the impacts of welfare benefit timing on retailers, and the relationship between physician work hours, medical errors, and mortality outcomes. Additionally, Zach co-organized and co-hosted the IRAEA's virtual research workshop on the economics of workers' compensation insurance. This fall, Zach will be on the job market.

One of Zach's research papers, "The Dependent Coverage Mandate Took a Bite Out of Crime," has explored the impact of expansions in private health insurance for young adults on arrests. Crime is disproportionately committed by young adults. According to Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) data, in 2019, approximately 45 percent of all arrests involved arrestees under the age of 30. In 2019, 19-to-25-year-olds accounted for 22 percent of violent crime arrestees and 20 percent of property crime arrestees in the United States, generating social costs of \$73.2 billion (in 2020 dollars). In light of the high costs of crime attributable to young adults, policies that change incentives for youth criminal behavior can have potentially large social welfare effects.

The Affordable Care Act's (ACA) Dependent Coverage Mandate (DCM) requires health insurers to allow young adults to remain on their parents' private health insurance plans until age 26. This provision was designed to increase insurance coverage among a relatively healthy population with historically high uninsured rates, potentially reducing adverse selection in insurance markets. Early estimates show that in the first year following the DCM's adoption, approximately two million young adults added parental employer-sponsored health insurance (ESI) in response to the DCM, which translated to approximately 938,000 fewer uninsured persons.



This study is the first to estimate the impact of the DCM on crime. Using a panel of law enforcement agency-months from the 2008-2013 National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) and a difference-in-differences approach, the authors find that implementation of the DCM is associated with a 4.8 to 10.8 percent decline in criminal incidents involving 19-to-25 relative to 27-to-29-year-old arrestees. This study, co-authored by Zach Fone, Andrew Friedson, Brandy Lipton, and Joseph Sabia, has received a revise and resubmit from the *Journal of Law and Economics*.

# 2021-2022 CHEPS Research Fellows

## Jacob Penglase



### **“The More the Poorer? Resource Sharing and Scale Economies in Large Households”**

(with Rossella Calvi, Denni Tommasi, and Alexander Wolf)

The composition of households may have important consequences for the well-being of their members. Contrary to developed countries, where the vast majority of households comprise either single adults or nuclear families with a small number of children, households in the developing world are large and typically include several generations and many children. In these countries, the welfare state is often limited, and families are the primary providers of material and non-material support to their members. In such contexts, understanding the relationship between family structure and individuals' welfare is of primary importance. In this paper, we develop a framework to study the material well-being of individuals in different types of households, with a specific focus on family structures that are prevalent in developing countries.

We aim to identify important aspects of intra-household consumption in order to answer the following questions: What is the income adjustment that would make an only child just as well off as if they were living in a larger household? How much income would a member of an extended family require to attain the same standard of living that they would have if they were living in a nuclear family? In larger households, individuals are allocated a smaller share of the household budget, but they tend to benefit from economies of scale in consumption: food waste per person, for example, is likely lower in larger households, and more people jointly consume goods that can be shared (such as energy goods). Quantifying this trade-off is necessary to compare individuals' well-being across households and may be important for the correct measurement of poverty and inequality.

We apply our method using data from Bangladesh and Mexico. In Bangladesh, we find a modest amount of consumption sharing, suggesting that ignoring economies of scale is not likely to lead to a large degree of error in individual consumption estimates. By contrast, we estimate significant economies of scale in consumption in Mexico, which, on average, increase individual consumption in extended families or nuclear families with multiple children by 10 percent relative to nuclear families with one child. Furthermore, we find that women in Mexican families are allocated a larger fraction of household resources relative to women in Bangladesh. In both countries, children command the smallest share of household resources, but their disadvantage is more pronounced in Bangladesh. We conclude by conducting a poverty analysis that accounts for both inequality within the household, and economies of scale in consumption. Our results suggest that poverty measures that ignore these features of consumption, such as those used by the World Bank, may misclassify certain types of individuals as either poor or non-poor.



**Ryan Brown** (CU Denver)



## **The Impact of Access to Clean Water on Cognitive and Physical Development: Evidence from Mexico's Programa de Agua Limpia**

(with Sonia R. Bhalotra, and Atheendar S. Venkataramani)

The United Nations and WHO have declared access to clean water a basic human right. Yet, more than three-quarters of a billion people live without a close source of clean water. Exposure to unclean water leads to dire health consequences such as the spread of diarrhea, cholera, dysentery, typhoid, and polio. Of these maladies, diarrhea is the most prevalent, and represents the second leading cause of child death in the world.

While the immediate and adverse effect of clean water access on infant mortality is well documented, there is very limited evidence on the long-term impact of chlorinated water. Moreover, there is good reason to believe that by focusing only on immediate mortality, researchers and policymakers may be severely underestimating the true value of clean water. The reason for this is that there is a growing consensus that health shocks in the first 1000 days of life can have a persistent impact on the individual's physical and cognitive development. In addition, a robust literature has demonstrated a positive association between health capital, such as stature and intelligence, and adult economic outcomes. These two widely accepted facts suggest that increased access to clean water at birth may have a long-lasting impact on the economy.

The goal of our paper is to provide causal evidence of the contemporary relationship between improved access to clean water in infancy and physical and cognitive growth. We focus on infant exposure because the caloric requirements for brain development are higher during this period than at any other stage of the life course, making infants especially vulnerable to diminished cognitive endowments as a result of diarrhea. To account for selectivity into access to clean water, we exploit the introduction of the Programa de Agua Limpia (National Clean Water Program; PAL) in Mexico, a large-scale nationwide water treatment policy. This program provides quasi-random temporal variation, as its introduction was a sudden reaction to the unanticipated threat of cholera created by an epidemic spreading through the countries neighboring Mexico. PAL also provides rich geographic variation as its impact was systematically larger in areas with worse pre-program water quality.

Our preliminary estimates find sizeable positive effects of exposure to clean water in infancy on performance in Raven's cognition tests and height measured at the ages of 10-16. We estimate that experiencing the average diarrheal mortality decline over our sample period throughout the entire infancy period leads to a ~6% increase in cognitive assessment scores and a 0.11 standard deviation increase in height during adolescence and that these gains persist into early adulthood. Furthermore, when exploring economic outcomes in early adulthood, we find evidence that individuals that experienced early life access to clean water achieved significantly higher hourly earnings.

# Faculty Research Spotlights

## Audrey Beck



### **Using Crowd-Sourced Data to Explore Police-Related-Deaths in the United States (2000-2017): The Case of Fatal Encounters**

(with Brian Finch, D. Brian Burghart, Richard Johnson, David Klinger, and Kyla Thomas)

Officer-involved homicides have received considerable public and scholarly attention in recent years, and, yet our ability to track, explain, and reduce these deaths is hampered by data quality issues. For the last few years, colleagues and I have been amassing a centralized database, aiming to not only have the most complete data on officer-involved homicides, but also to link it to characteristics of neighborhoods, police departments, and county/state policies to understand the determinants of these deaths. The National Officer-Involved Homicide Database (NOIHD) documents homicide counts across the U.S. from 2000 through 2017 and will be regularly updated as additional police department and neighborhood data become available. The NOIHD will be freely available for scholarly use and our accompanying website will also generate quick statistics for communities, journalists, and other interested parties.

One of our recent publications, published in the *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, documents just such a need for a more complete data source. To date, one of the most widely used data sets for studying police homicides—the Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR) kept by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)—is collected from a voluntary sample. Using the National Officer-Involved Homicide Database (NOIHD), we find the SHR police homicide data to be substantially incomplete, comparatively. This is due to both SHR non-reporting and substantial under-reporting by agencies.

Further, our inquiry discloses a pattern of error in which “victims” and “offenders” are switched in the data, and that investigating agencies are often incorrectly listed as the responsible agency, which seriously jeopardizes police department-level analyses. Finally, we find evidence of sample bias such that the SHR data system is not representative of all police departments, nor is it representative of large police departments. We conclude that the SHR data is of dubious value for assessing correlates of police homicides in the United States, as all analyses using it will reflect these widespread biases and significant undercounts. Certainly, the NOIHD provides a more complete alternative until such time that mandatory systems are implemented.

## Brandy Lipton



### **“School Vision and Hearing Screening Mandates and Children’s Academic Outcomes”**

Most states require that school-aged children receive vision and hearing screening as a condition of participation in public education. These requirements are motivated by the notion that correcting vision and hearing problems will improve a child’s ability to learn. However, little research has examined the effectiveness of these mandates in reducing unmet health care needs or improving academic achievement. Study of the effects of school screening mandates is policy relevant as not all states require that children receive screenings and among states with a requirement, there is significant variation in when and how often children are screened.

We examine the cumulative effects of vision and hearing screening mandates on academic outcomes among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders using 1997-2017 Monitoring the Future (MTF) data. Our empirical approach leverages changes in state-level mandates and differences in grade level requirements. For each student, we calculate the number of years she would have received screening based on her expected year of school entry and assuming a typical progression through school. Because vision and hearing screening requirements are often implemented at the same time, we consider our estimates to represent the effect of receiving both types of screening. Models control for child demographic characteristics and state and year fixed effects. Estimates are weighted and errors are clustered at the state level. To establish that vision and hearing screening requirements prompt follow-up care, we also examine eye doctor and primary care visits using the 1997-2017 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). This analysis uses a similar empirical strategy, except we use a concurrent rather than cumulative mandate variable and examine children of all ages. This strategy allows us to assess whether screening mandates affect use of related care at younger ages that could later translate to improvements in academic outcomes.

Our findings suggest that an additional year of vision and hearing screening is associated with a significant 1-2 percentage point reduction in the likelihood that 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students report ever repeating a grade. We also estimate significant improvements in self-rated school ability and having a grade point average equivalent to a B + or better. We find that effects vary by socioeconomic status, with lower socioeconomic status students experiencing a greater benefit from the mandates. Children from lower income families may be less likely to receive regular recommended health care, and therefore receiving health screenings at school may have a larger impact on these students. We also find that concurrent vision and hearing screening mandates are associated with significant increases in eye doctor and primary care visits using the NHIS. Our findings suggest that vision and hearing screening may improve academic outcomes and that effects are larger for disadvantaged children. These results may inform states considering whether they should require school screenings or alter the current schedule of screenings to include additional grade levels.



## Hao Fe



### **“How Bad Is Crime for Business? Evidence from Consumer Behavior”**

(with Viviane Sanfelice)

In this study, we leverage point-specific crime and consumer visit data to investigate the local impacts of different crimes on subsequent consumer visits to restaurants, entertainment and retail establishments, a subset of businesses that are highly sensitive to actual and perceived levels of safety (Rosenthal and Ross, 2010). Our findings suggest that consumers respond to property and street crimes. However, the response is only in the extensive margin measured by

number of visits and number of consumers, not in the intensive margin measured by venue dwell time.

The vast majority of the literature on the effect of crime on business activities approaches the topic from the supply side focusing on business inception, closure or relocation. For example, Greenbaum and Tita (2004) investigate the impact of local homicide levels upon job creation and destruction caused by changes in business status. They observe no significant impacts of violence on business closures. Most likely owing to the dearth of detailed data, much less attention has been devoted to the consequences of crime on the demand side of business activities. This study begins to fill this gap. To the best of our knowledge, we provide the first empirical evidence of how routine consumer activities are affected by local crimes.

We find that the effects of property crimes and street crimes on consumer visits in the following month are negative, meaningful, and strongly significant. One additional property crime incident near a venue results in 1.13 fewer visits to that venue in the following month, which is a 12% reduction in consumer visits with one standard deviation increase in property crime. The estimated effect for violent crime is also negative, though not statistically significant.

We also look at the crime effects by place of occurrence. One additional crime in streets near a venue results in about three fewer visits to that venue in the following month, a 10% reduction in consumer visits with one standard deviation increase in street crime. Notably, while the effect is large and significant for incidents that occur in public spaces, crimes that occur within residences do not have a statistically significant effect on subsequent consumer visits. Residential crime is less visible to consumers and usually not random, which precludes fear of victimization. However, residential crime is highly correlated to neighborhood trends.

The fact that we do not find a statistically significant result for residential crime suggests that unobserved factors are not likely driving the negative association between outdoor crimes and consumers visits found by us. Compared to other studies that use the same data to measure consumer visits, our estimates are non-negligible (Athey et al. 2018; Allcott et al., 2020; Dave et al., 2020). Overall, our findings are consistent with the argument that the perception of crime and the risk of victimization scare off consumers, potentially making businesses less profitable.

## Jeffrey Clemens

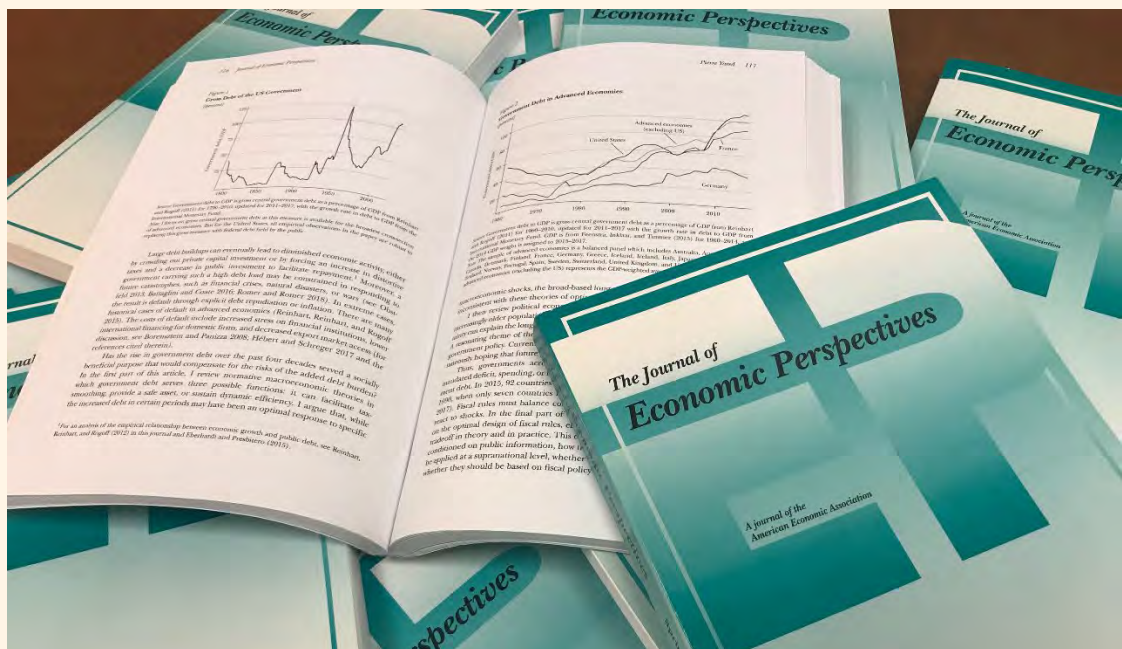


### “How Do Firms Respond to Minimum Wage Increases? Understanding the Relevance of Non-Employment Margins”

"[S]elf-described conservatives tend to believe that the minimum wage reduces employment and is an undesirable policy. Self-described liberals, by contrast, tend to believe that the minimum wage is desirable and that it does not, at historical levels, reduce employment.

I emphasize that both of these views are incomplete. Contra the conservative view, a binding minimum wage need not reduce employment. But contra the liberal view, the minimum wage can harm its intended beneficiaries even when it has no effect on employment. This paper has highlighted the teaching opportunities offered by theory and evidence on a rich set of firms' decision margins. These margins include output prices, non-wage compensation, and job attributes like effort requirements, safety measures, and the overall quality of the working environment. My central point is that accounting for these decision margins can substantively alter the conclusions one draws when using basic theory to analyze the minimum wage's effects."

Clemens, Jeffrey. 2021. "How Do Firms Respond to Minimum Wage Increases? Understanding the Relevance of Non-employment Margins." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 35 (1): 51-72.



## Ryan Abman and Hisham Foad



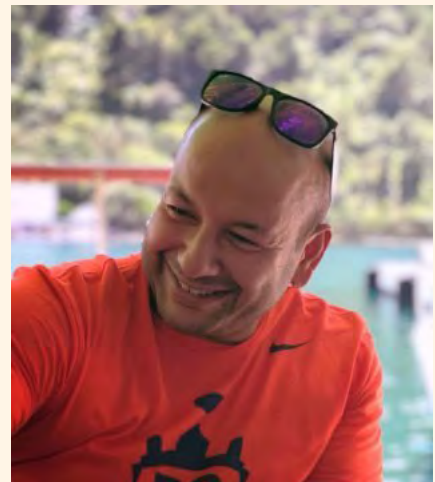
### **“Border Walls and Crime: Evidence from the Secure Fence Act”**

In the last two decades, the total number of global migrants has increased by nearly 50%, to 258 million (United Nations Population Division (2017)). In response to this increase, many countries hosting migrants have focused on increasing border security and regulating migration. In the United States, home to around 50 million migrants, increased border security has been a key focus of the Trump administration. Between 2004 and 2017, the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol's enacted budget increased from \$6.0 to \$14.3 billion, a 138% increase (U.S.

Department of Homeland Security (2019)). Since the passage of the 2006 Secure Fence Act, a key element of efforts to increase border enforcement has been the construction of a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

While the costs of such infrastructure investments are known (and economically significant), the benefits of border wall expansion are difficult to quantify. Proposed benefits by proponents of border wall expansion can be classified in terms of labor market effects (wage and employment effects on native populations from reduced migration), public expenditure effects (changes in public program spending from changes in migrant flows), and effects on crime and safety.

Beyond the labor market effects of border walls, recent public discourse has focused on the crime and safety effects of these barriers, especially after President Trump made the unsubstantiated claim that the border wall had greatly reduced crime in the city of El Paso during his State of the Union address in 2019. While there are no shortage of opinions on crime in border regions, there is little rigorous empirical evidence on the potential impact of border infrastructure on local crime.



The present study addresses this gap in the literature and in the political discourse. We examine the unprecedented expansion of border infrastructure built along the U.S.-Mexico border following the passage of the 2006 Secure Fence Act on county-level property and violent crime rates. We utilize synthetic control matching to assess the effect of constructing a border wall on crime across twelve border counties. Overall, we find construction of border fencing has no appreciable effects on either property or violent crime rates. Across 24 estimates we find only one that is significant (violent crime in Santa Cruz County, Arizona) - all others are not significant (nor even of consistent direction). Leveraging spatial and temporal data on completion timing, we also examine whether our overall effects may be masking heterogeneity from construction periods and post construction periods and conclude that our lack of results are not driven by offsetting effects.



## Shoshana Grossbard

Professor Grossbard has received international recognition by being invited to give the following keynote lectures and seminar presentations about her research. In her keynote address at the webinar in honor of Margaret Reid, Univ of Manitoba, Canada, on March 12, 2021, she presented “Economics of the Household: An Agenda for the Next Decade.” We live in a world where people spend increasing proportions of their time at home, caring for growing numbers of elderly and others without relying on institutional care. Home production of caring, nutrition, and health is now receiving more attention and economists of the household such as Dr. Grossbard are well-placed for increasing our understanding of how industrialized countries such as the USA can better care for the healthy lives of individuals and families. The other keynote was Prof. Nancy Folbre from University of Massachusetts. Prof. Grossbard will also be presenting a keynote address at the 2nd Brazilian Meeting in Family and Gender Economics on August 31, 2021. The other keynote will be given by Prof. Pierre-Andre Chiappori from Columbia University.

Furthermore, Professor Grossbard was invited to talk about her recent research on deaths from COVID-19 and demographic factors at two international seminars. This research, performed jointly with Ainhoa Aparicio from University of Turin was recently published. Its main take-away is that it quantifies the degree to which co-residence of members of different generations contributed to deaths from COVID-19. Accordingly, Professor Grossbard presented “Intergenerational Residence Patterns and Covid-19 Fatalities in Europe and the US” at a Webinar Series on COVID-19 Impact Analysis organized by the China Data Institute and Future Data Lab on Jan 15, 2021 (via Zoom). Recently, she presented “How does Economics of the Household Help us Cope with COVID-19?” at the University of Economics, Ho-Chi Minh City, Vietnam, on July 1, 2021 (via Zoom).

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PROF. S. GROSSBARD


About My Work Themes Lectures

### Research on Households

Shoshana Grossbard, a pioneer on research about households and families, is “the premier economist currently engaged in research on the economics of marriage and .. the economics of the household” (Michael Grossman, NBER). “a leading figure in family economics” (Edward P. Lazear, Stanford U) and “widely known for her work on the economics of the family” (James J. Heckman, U of Chicago). She published the **first non-cooperative model of household decision-making** in 1984 and has applied it to analyze labor supply, health outcomes, household production and care work, fertility, consumption, marital status, in close to 90 publications.

Trained as an economist at the U of Chicago (Gary Becker PhD), most of her articles appeared in economics journals, but she also published in sociology, demography and anthropology journals and interdisciplinary books. Currently a **member of the Family Inequality Network**, U of Chicago, scholar in residence and Professor of Economics emerita at San Diego State University and a research fellow at **IZA**, **CESifo** and **GLO**, she has been a fellow at Stanford's Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences.

CV CURRICULUM VITAE



Shoshana is ranked among the top 5% of women in economics and among 8% of all economists in terms of Number of Citations, Weighted by Number of Authors and Recursive Impact Factors, Discounted by Citation Age according to REPEC (Research Papers in Economics); more than 6000 people follow her when she tweets as @econoflove. She is the current and founding editor of the **Review of Economics of the Household (REHO)**; publishing e.g. on **COVID19 AND ECONOMICS OF THE HOUSEHOLD** and founded the **Society of Economics of the Household (SEHO)**.

## Yang Liang



### **“Surviving the U.S.-China Trade War? Evidence from Chinese Exporters”**

(with Weiyi Shi, and Dora Hu)

After decades of supporting free trade, in 2018 the Trump administration substantially raised import tariffs and major trade partners retaliated. Although President Trump’s trade war with the world involves multiple battles, the main battlefield has clearly been with China where the largest tranches of import tariffs targeted approximately more than \$550 billion of Chinese products. And China retaliated with tariffs on more than \$185 billion of U.S. goods during 2018-2019.

The trade war caused economic pain on both sides by introducing uncertainties and financial difficulties for firms, especially exporters, and also leading to higher prices for consumers. Many recent empirical studies have mainly evaluated the negative consequences of the trade war for US consumers and firms (Fajgelbaum et al., 2019, Amiti et al., 2020). Surprisingly, there has been very little evidence on how this economic conflict impacted the Chinese economy.

This paper fills this gap and studies the effect of the U.S.-China trade war on the survival of Chinese exporters in the short run. Utilizing a novel data set containing the near-universe of exporting firms’ registration status and a firm-level tariff measure from the customs transactions records, we find that Trump tariffs on Chinese products significantly lead Chinese exporters to exit the market. For a one percentage point rise in the Trump tariff exposure, the probability of firm exit increases by 0.8 percentage points. We also test the heterogeneous effects across a wide array of firm characteristics, such as firm ownership, firm size, firm age, and the initial export portfolio. Particularly, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and firms with a less diversified export portfolio (in terms of product mix and destination) are more likely exit when facing the same tariff shock.



# Stata & R Bootcamp 2020

Prior to the beginning of the 2020 semester, incoming CHEPS graduate fellows took part, virtually, in the annual CHEPS “Coding Bootcamp.” During this week-long, immersive training led by former CHEPS fellow and current UNH PhD candidate Tam Nguyen, the incoming first-year MA students were introduced to the statistical software skills and techniques necessary for carrying out the professional-level research that CHEPS conducts. This experience includes instruction in two different statistical software packages, Stata and R, which are some of the industry standard technologies used in applied economic research.



The bootcamp familiarized the student affiliates with different public datasets that have been used in current and past CHEPS projects. Some examples of the datasets include the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Current Population Survey (CPS), the American Community Survey (ACS), the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), the General Social Survey (GSS), the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), and the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program (SEER) data. In addition to using these datasets, the students developed the habit of looking at codebooks when using survey data to create new variables.



Exposure to these skills prior to the start of the school year both helps the Center, as its incoming junior researchers are ready to “hit the ground running” at the beginning of the semester since they are exposed early on to material and concepts that are important to the core curriculum of the MA program at San Diego State. During the daily lessons, fellows complete assignments in groups and receive homework coding assignments every evening. At the end of the week, students are assigned a final coding project—a replication of the data work of a previously published paper. Graduate research fellows who participate in this bootcamp often consider it among one of the most valuable experiences of their graduate career.



# CHEPS Publications, 2020-2021

## Peer-Reviewed Publications

Abman, Ryan, and Clark Lundberg. 2021. "Maize Price Volatility and Deforestation," Forthcoming, *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*.

Anderson, D. Mark, Ryan Brown, Kerwin K. Charles, and Daniel Rees. 2020. "Occupational Licensing and Maternal Health: Evidence from Early Midwifery Laws," *Journal of Political Economy* 128(11): 4337-4383.

Anderson, D. Mark, Kyutaro Matsuzawa\*, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2021. "Marriage Equality and Youth Mental Health," Forthcoming, *Journal of Law and Economics*.

Anderson, D. Mark, Kyutaro Matsuzawa\* & Joseph J. Sabia, 2020. "Cigarette Taxes and Teen Marijuana Use," *National Tax Journal* 73(2): 475-510.

Aparicio, Ainhua and Shoshana Grossbard. 2021. "Are COVID Fatalities in the US Higher than in the EU, and if so, why?" *Review of Economics of the Household* 19(2): 307-326.

Aparicio, Ainhua and Shoshana Grossbard. 2021. "Later onset, fewer deaths from COVID," *Pathogens and Global Health*, 115(1): 1-3.

Aparicio-Fenoll, Ainhua, and Shoshana Grossbard. 2020. "Intergenerational Residence Patterns and Covid-19 Fatalities in the EU and the US," *Economics and Human Biology* 39: 100934.

Boudreaux M, Lipton BJ. 2021. "Medicaid benefit generosity and employment out-comes: evidence from Medicaid adult vision benefits," Forthcoming, *Journal of Human Resources*.

Brown, Caitlin, Rossells Calvi, and Jacob Penglase. 2021. "Sharing the Pie: An Analysis of Undernutrition and Individual Consumption in Bangladesh," Forthcoming, *Journal of Public Economics*.

Brown, Ryan, Hani Mansour, and Stephen O'Connell. 2021. "Does Local Female Political Representation Empower Women to Run for Higher Office? Evidence from State and National Legislatures in India," Forthcoming, *The World Bank Economic Review*.

Caminade, Juliette, Antoine Chapsal, and Jacob Penglase. 2021. "Interim Measures in Antitrust Investigations: An Economic Discussion" with Juliette Caminade and Antoine Chapsal, Forthcoming, *Journal of Competition Law and Economics*.

Cesur, Resul, Travis Friedman\*, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2020. "War, Traumatic Health Shocks, and Religiosity," *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 179: 475-502.

Churchill, Brandyn\*, Andrew Dickinson\*, Taylor Mackay, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2021. "The Effect of State E-Verify Mandates on Crime," Forthcoming, *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*.

Clemens, Jeffrey. 2021. "How Do Firms Respond to Minimum Wage Increases? Understanding the Relevance of Non-employment Margins," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 35(1): 51-72.

Clemens, Jeffrey, Lisa B. Kahn. 2021. "Dropouts Need Not Apply? The Minimum Wage and Skill Upgrading," *Journal of Labor Economics* 39(S1): 107-149.

Clemens, Jeffrey, Joshua Gottlieb, and Jeffrey Hicks. 2021. "How Would Medicare for All Affect Health System Capacity? Evidence from Medicare for Some," Forthcoming, *Tax Policy and the Economy*.

Clemens, Jeffrey and Stan Vueger. 2020. "Implications of the Covid-19 Pandemic for State Government Tax Revenues," *National Tax Journal* 73(3): 619-644.

Clemens, Jeffrey and Michael R. Strain. 2020. "Implications of Schedule Irregularity as a Minimum Wage Response Margin," *Applied Economics Letters* 27(20): 1691-1694.

Croda, Enrica and Shoshana Grossbard. 2021. "Women Pay the Price of COVID-19 more than Men." *Review of Economics of the Household* 19(1): 1-9.

Dave, Dhaval, Taylor Mackay, Thanh Tam Nguyen\*, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2021. "Do Ban-the-Box Laws Affect Crime?" Forthcoming, *Journal of Law and Economics*.

Dave, Dhaval, Andrew Friedson\*, Kyutaro Matsuzawa\*, Drew McNichols\*, Connor Redpath\*, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2021. "Risk Aversion, Offsetting Community Effects, and COVID-19: Evidence from an Indoor Political Rally," Forthcoming, *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty*.

Dave, Dhaval, Andrew Friedson, Kyutaro Matsuzawa\*, Joseph J. Sabia, and Samuel Safford\*. 2021. "Were Urban Cowboys Enough to Control COVID-19? Local Shelter-in-Place Orders and Coronavirus Case Growth," Forthcoming, *Journal of Urban Economics*.

Dave, Dhaval, Andrew Friedson, Kyutaro Matsuzawa\*, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2021. "When Do Shelter-in-Place Orders Fight COVID-19 Best? Policy Heterogeneity Across States and Adoption Time," *Economic Inquiry* 59(1): 29-52.

Dave, Dhaval, Drew McNichols\*, and Joseph J. Sabia. 2021. "The Contagion Externality of a Superspreading Event: The Sturgis Motorcycle Rally and COVID-19," *Southern Economic Journal* 87(3): 769-807.

Decker S, Abdus S, Lipton BJ. 2021. "Eligibility for and enrollment in Medicaid among non-elderly adults after implementation of the Affordable Care Ac.," Forthcoming, *Medical Care Research and Review*.

Finch, B., Beck, A., Burghart, D. B., Johnson, R., Klinger, D., & Thomas, K. 2020. "Using Crowd-Sourced Data to Explore Police-Related-Deaths in the United States (2000-2017): The Case of Fatal Encounters." *Journal of Open Health Data*.

Friedson, Andrew, Drew McNichols\*, Joseph J. Sabia, and Dhaval Dave. 2021. "Shelter-in-Place Orders and Public Health: Evidence from California During the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 40(1): 258-283.

Grossbard, Shoshana and Andrea H. Beller. 2021. "Assessing the New Home Economics with 2020 vision." (with Andrea H. Beller). In *Constructing a More Scientific Economics: John Tomer's Pluralistic and Humanistic Economics* (Morris Altman, editor). Palgrave, Forthcoming.

Grossbard, Shoshana, Lingrui Zhang, and Tansel Yilmazer. 2021. "The Gender Gap in citations of articles published in two demographic economics journals," Forthcoming, *Review of Economics of the Household*.

Grossbard, Shoshana and Victoria Vernon. 2020. "More chores at home: a price immigrants pay when marrying a native?" *IZA Journal of Development and Migration* 11: 16.

Hoehn Velasco, Lauren and Jacob Penglase. 2021. "Does Unilateral Divorce Impact Women's Labor Supply? Evidence from Mexico," Forthcoming, *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*.

Jha, Priyaranjan, Jae Yoon Lee, Yang Liang and Devashish Mitra. 2021. "International trade and employment: Theory and evidence from Korean firms, Forthcoming, *The World Economy*.

Liang, Yang. 2021. "Job creation and job destruction: The effect of trade shocks on U.S. manufacturing employment," Forthcoming, *The World Economy*.

Lipton BJ, Nguyen J\*. 2021. Schiaffino M. "California's Health4All Kids expansion and health insurance coverage among low-income noncitizen children." Forthcoming, *Health Affairs*.

Lipton BJ. 2021. "Adult Medicaid benefit generosity and receipt of recommended health services among low-income children: the spillover effects of Medicaid adult dental coverage expansions," Forthcoming, *Journal of Health Economics*.

Lipton BJ. 2020. "Association between health insurance and health among adults with diabetes: evidence from Medicare eligibility," *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 68(2): 388-394

McGeary KA, Dave D, Lipton BJ, Roeper, T. 2020. "The effects of public smoking bans on child health and venue of smoking." *American Journal of Health Economics* 6(1): 1-38.

Nguyen P\*, Schiaffino M, Lipton BJ. 2021. Disparities in self-management outcomes by limited English proficiency among adults with heart disease. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 23: 101407

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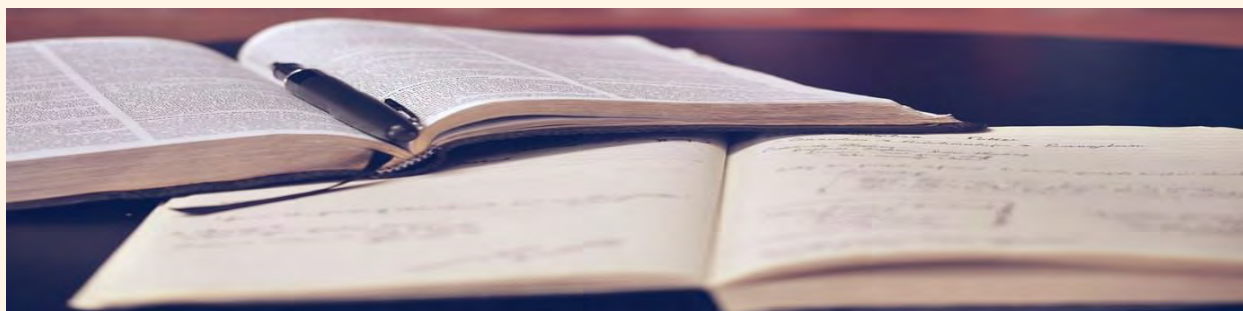
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