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Updated: October 2009

PLACEMENT COMMITTEE

Placement Chair: Ricardo Reis, (212) 851-4007; rr2572@columbia.edu
Placement Assistant: Jody Johnson, (212) 854-6881; jj2289@columbia.edu

REFERENCES

Professor Janet Currie Columbia University Department of Economics Phone: (212) 854-4520 Fax: (212) 854-8059 Email: jc2663@columbia.edu	Professor W. Bentley MacLeod Columbia University Department of Economics Phone: (212) 854-4212 Fax: (212) 854-4782 Email: wbm2103@columbia.edu	Professor Till von Wachter Columbia University Department of Economics Phone: (212) 854-5712 Fax: (212) 854-8059 Email: vw2112@columbia.edu
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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Economics, Columbia University, 2010 (Expected)
M.Phil. Economics, Columbia University, 2007
M.A. Economics, Columbia University, 2006
B.A. Philosophy and Economics, University of Bayreuth, Germany, 2004

CITIZENSHIP

Germany

RESEARCH FIELDS

Labor Economics, Health Economics, Industrial Organization, Environmental Policy and Regulation.

TEACHING FIELDS

All reserach fields, Development, Econometrics, Microeconomics, Philosophy and Economics.

JOB MARKET PAPER

“Labor Costs and the Evolution of New Establishments”

(presented at the 2009 NBER Summer Institute, Labor Studies).

Previous researchers have attributed the slow growth of new plants to financial constraints and learning. This paper proposes higher wages as an additional constraint. Using linked employer-employee data from Germany, I show that wages in new establishments are 10 percent higher than in old establishments, a difference that persists even after controlling for establishment and worker fixed effects. This difference is not due to compensating differentials but instead provides strong evidence for search frictions. Simulations show that the higher labor costs can account for a significant part of the evolution of the firm size distribution.

PUBLICATIONS

“Does Wage Persistence Matter for Employment Fluctuations? Evidence from Displaced Workers”

(Joint with Till von Wachter, Conditional Acceptance, AEJ: Applied Economics).

Previous literature has found that tight labor market conditions during a job raise wages. Using the Displaced Worker Survey from 1984 to 2006, we show that most wage gains associated with good labor market conditions disappear at job loss. We also find that workers with higher wages due to tight past labor market conditions face higher risk of layoff. These findings support an important role of persistent rigidities in the wage setting process that are related to layoff decisions. This provides micro evidence supporting the notion that downward rigid employment contracts may help explain the Shimer (2005) ‘puzzle’ of low variability of wages relative to employment fluctuations.

“Air Pollution and Infant Health: Lessons from New Jersey”

(Joint with Janet Currie and Matthew Neidell, Journal of Health Economics, 2009, Vol. 28, No 3: 688-703).

We examine the impact of three “criteria” air pollutants on infant health in New Jersey in the 1990s by combining information about mother’s residential location from birth certificates with information from air quality monitors. In addition to large sample size, our work offers three important innovations: First, because we know the exact addresses of mothers, we select mothers closest to air monitors to ensure a more accurate measure of air quality. Second, since we follow mothers over time, we control for unobserved characteristics of mothers using maternal fixed effects. Third, we examine interactions of air pollution with smoking and various predictors of poor infant health outcomes. We find consistently negative effects of exposure to pollution, especially carbon monoxide, both during and after pregnancy. The effects are considerably larger for smokers than for non-smokers as well as for older mothers. Since automobiles are the main source of carbon monoxide emissions, our results have important implications for regulation of automobile emissions.

“Fetal Exposures to Toxic Releases and Infant Health”

(Joint with Janet Currie, American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings, 2009, Vol. 99, No 2: 177-183).

Every year, millions of pounds of toxic chemicals thought to be linked to developmental problems in fetuses and young children are released into the air. In this paper we estimate the effect of these releases on the health of newborns. Using data from the Toxic Release Inventory Program and Vital Statistics Natality and Mortality files, we find significant negative effects of prenatal exposure to toxicants on gestation and birth weight. We also find that several developmental chemicals increase the probability of infant death. The effect is quite sizeable: the reductions in cadmium, toluene, and epichlorohydrin releases during the 90s account for about 3.9 percent of the overall decrease in

infant mortality. Our results are robust to several specification checks, such as comparing developmental to non-developmental chemicals, and fugitive air releases to stack air releases.

RESEARCH PAPERS

“The Labor Supply Effects of Unemployment Insurance: Regression Discontinuity and Structural Estimates”

(Joint with Till von Wachter and Stefan Bender).

Two different approaches to study the labor supply effect of unemployment insurance institutions have emerged in the literature: The estimation of structural models and the exploitation of natural-experiments to derive reduced form elasticities. In this paper we combine both approaches by estimating a structural search model for a group of workers that face sharp age discontinuities in unemployment benefits eligibility. Using the universe of social security records in Germany we are able to precisely estimate reduced form effects of increasing potential unemployment benefit durations. We compare these estimates to the implied labor supply elasticities from estimating the structural model and evaluate how the quasi-experiment can help in estimating the structural model. We compare the performance of three different approaches to predict the effects of policy changes that occurred in Germany in the late 1990s: regression discontinuity estimates, structural estimation without quasi-experiment, and structural estimation with quasi-experiment.

“Using Worker Flows in the Analysis of Establishment Turnover: Evidence from Germany”

(Joint with Tanja Hethey).

The establishment history panel (BHP) has been widely used to analyze establishment turnover in Germany. Previous research has relied on the first and last appearance of the establishment identifier to identify openings and closings. We improve on this approach using a new dataset containing all worker flows between establishments in Germany. This allows us to credibly identify establishment births and deaths from 1975 to 2004 and compare this with previous measures. Our approach has many advantages and we show that many entries and exits of establishment identifiers do not correspond to true openings and closings of new establishments. Furthermore there are many new establishments that fall into the category of spin offs from other establishments. We then use this data to provide detailed patterns on establishment entry and survival based on the BHP and analyze job creation and destruction based on establishment turnover. This data will eventually be made available to users of the BHP and will have a profound effect on the future analysis of establishment births and deaths in Germany.

“The Long-Term Impact of Job Displacement in Germany During the 1982 Recession on Earnings, Income, and Employment”

(Joint with Till von Wachter and Stefan Bender).

We show that workers displaced from their stable jobs during mass-layoffs in 1982 recession in Germany suffered permanent earnings losses of 10-15 percent lasting at least 15 years. These estimates are obtained using data and methodology comparable to similar studies for the United States. Exploiting advantages of the German data, we also show that while reduction and recovery in time worked plays a role in explaining earnings losses during the first ten years, the majority of the long-run loss is due to a decline in wages. We also show that even the generous German unemployment insurance system replaced only a small fraction of the total earnings loss. These findings suggest that job displacements can lead to large and lasting reductions in income even in labor markets with tighter social safety nets and lower earnings inequality.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

“The Dynamics of Earnings Inequality: The Role of Employer Entry and Exit”

“Estimating the Role of Search and Human Capital for Earnings Losses After Displacement”

(Joint with Till von Wachter and Uliana Loginova).

“Water Pollution and Infant Health”

(Joint with Janet Currie).

“Smoking Bans and Infant Health”

(Joint with Mariesa Herrmann).

“The Labor Market Effects of School Tracking in Germany”

(Joint with W. Bentley MacLeod and Miguel Urquiola, Submitted Proposal for NSF Grant).

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Affiliations

Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA), Bonn, Research Affiliate.

Columbia Population Research Center (CPRC).

Referee

American Economic Review, Journal of Labor Economics, Labour Economics.

Conference Presentations

(2008) Population Association of America Meeting, New Orleans;

Comparative Analysis of Enterprise Data, Budapest.

(2009) American Economic Association Meeting, San Francisco;

NBER Summer Institute Labor Studies, Boston;

Census Research Data Center Conference, Cornell, Ithaca.

Invited Seminar Presentations

(2008) Rheinisch-Westfälisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, Essen;

University of Trier; Institute for Employment Research, Nuremberg.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant

Janet Currie

Empirical work on infant health and education related projects.

2005 to present

Columbia University

Research Assistant

German Council of Economic Experts

Development and evaluation of business cycle indicators for short term economic growth forecasting.

Summer 2005

Wiesbaden, Germany

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor: Introduction to Applied Econometrics, at University of Bayreuth, Summer 2006 and Summer 2008

Teaching Assistant: Intermediate Microeconomics, Spring 2006

Teaching Assistant: Principles of Economics, Fall 2006

Teaching Assistant: Game Theory, Spring 2004

Instructor: Essay Writing and Presentations: Spring 2003 and Spring 2004

Teaching Assistant: Introduction to Ethics, Fall 2002

HONORS AND AWARDS

Wueller Prize for Best Summer Research Proposal, 2009

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Summer Fellowship, Summer 2009

Program for Economic Research, Summer Research Grant, Summer 2008

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, grant for research travelling, 2007 to present

Wueller Pre-Dissertation Award, December 2007

Fellow of the Population Center at Columbia University, Summer 2007 to present

Wueller Research Award, Best Research Proposal, December 2006

Program for Economic Research, Summer Research Grant, Summer 2006

Graduate Fellowship 2005 to present

NON-ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Timbaktu Collective (development NGO)

Andhra Pradesh, India

Internship

Summer 2001

Documentation of the NGO's work and design of information materials.

German Red Cross

Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany

Civil Service

2000 - 2001

Working with elderly people and nursing of comatose patients.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

German (native); English (fluent); French (good knowledge)