

Adán Silverio Murillo

Development Economics · Applied Econometrics

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School of Public Affairs

American University

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EDUCATION

American University

SPA Diversity Postdoctoral Fellow

University of Minnesota

Ph.D. in Applied Economics

THESIS TITLE: Essays on Development Economics

THESIS COMMITTEE:

Paul Glewwe

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M.S. in Economic Theory, ITAM, Mexico

B.A. in Economics, UNAM, Mexico

RESEARCH FIELDS

Primary

Development Economics

Applied Econometrics

Secondary

Family Economics

Economics of Education

Wife vs. Husband: How Can Differences in Identity Identify Poor Quality Data?

Asset information and household characteristics are frequently used to conduct empirical research and to guide public policy. When using these variables, practitioners assume that they are less susceptible to misreporting. To test this assumption, I use data for poor households participating in Mexico's PROGRESA program, where the same questions regarding assets and home characteristics were asked to the wife and to the husband. I find: (1) important discrepancies in the information reported between the spouses; for example, when asked about the possession of a washing machine, the information reported did not match in 24% of the households; (2) this result has consequences for the targeting of social programs that use proxy means test; for example, 10.5% of the households would be classified as non-poor if asked to the husband, but as poor if asked to the wife; and (3) I present evidence that the difference in the information reported between the spouses is partially explained by differences in their self-identification of social class. In particular, when one of the spouses self-identify with a higher social class, with respect to the social class reported by the other spouse, then he or she reports more goods and services than those reported by the other spouse. This result is robust to a bounding argument for omitted variable bias implemented by Oster (2016). Overall, these findings suggest that the information regarding assets and services is not free of important misreporting, and that who answer the survey matters to identify families living in poverty.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor

- Quantitative Methods II (School of Public Affairs - American University) Spring 2018
- Quantitative Methods I (School of Public Affairs - American University) Fall 2017

Teaching Assistant Graduate Courses

- Consumer Choice (Instructor: Prof. Paul Glewwe) Fall 2013
- Production (Instructor: Prof. Terry Hurley) Fall 2013
- Game Theory (Instructor: Prof. Steve Polasky) Spring 2014
- Social Choice and Welfare (Instructor: Prof. Jay Coggins) Spring 2014
- Econometric Analysis II (Instructor: Prof. Paul Glewwe) Spring 2015
- Econometric Analysis II (Instructor: Prof. Paul Glewwe) Spring 2016

Teaching Assistant Undergraduate Courses

- Managerial Economics (Instructor: Prof. Jeffrey Apland) Fall 2016
- Managerial Economics (Instructor: Prof. Terry Hurley) Spring 2017

Camp Instructor

- Math (Graduate) Fall 2013
- Stata (Graduate) Fall 2015

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATIONS

2018

- ESCoE Conference on Economic Measurement 2018 Bank of England
- Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management (scheduled) Washington, D.C.
- Pathways to Gender Equality Conference (scheduled) Washington, D.C.

2017

- School of Public Affairs (SPA) American University
- School of Government (TEC) Tecnologico de Monterrey
- Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management (APPAM) Chicago, IL
- International Economic Association (IEA) Mexico City, Mexico
- Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association (LACEA) Buenos Aires, Argentina

2016

- Pacific Conference for Development Economics (PACDEV) Stanford University
- Conference on Human Capital and Growth (UNU-WIDER) Helsinki, Finland
- Workshop on Inequality and Poverty (RIDGE/NIP) Montevideo, Uruguay
- Midwest Economic Association (MEA) Evanston, IL
- Agricultural & Applied Economics Association (AAEA) Boston, MA

2015

- North East Universities Development Consortium (NEUDC) Brown University
- Midwest International Economic Development Conference (MIEDC) Madison, WI
- Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association (LACEA) Santa Cruz, Bolivia
- Midwest Economic Association (MEA) Minneapolis, MN

2013

- Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association (LACEA) Mexico City, Mexico
- International Conference on Income and Wealth Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

REFeree

- Journal of Population Economics

FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS

- Fulbright Fellowship
- Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Assistant Award, University of Minnesota
- Hsieh Graduate Fellowship, University of Minnesota
- Colonial Dames of America Scholar, University of Minnesota
- National Council for Science and Technology Fellowship, Mexico
- Centro de Estudios Espinosa Yglesias Fellowship, Mexico
- Ministry of Education Fellowship, Mexico

- Institute for Human Studies Conference & Research Grant, USA
- Minnesota Population Center Travel Grant, University of Minnesota
- Center for International Food and Agricultural Policy Travel Grant, University of Minnesota

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Deputy General Director of Impact Evaluation. Ministry of Social Development in Mexican Government, Mexico, DF (January 2011 - July 2011)
- Director of Quantitative Methods. Ministry of Social Development in Mexican Government, Mexico, DF (January 2007 - December 2010)
- Deputy Director of Econometric Analysis. PROGRESA Social Program, Mexico, DF (July 2005 - December 2006)
- Consultant. UNESCO and Peruvian Ministry of Education, Lima, Peru (May 2016 - July 2016)

OTHER RESEARCH PAPERS

FAMILY ECONOMICS

Socio-Economic Development and the Empowerment of Women Within the Household

Under review

This paper analyzes the role of GDP, income inequality, and sex ratio on women's empowerment measured by domestic violence, personal freedom, gender roles, and participation in household decisions. Using three waves of a national-state representative survey specialized in women's empowerment in Mexico and state fixed-effects models, I find: i. an increase in GDP is associated with improvements in personal freedom; ii. a better income distribution improves the participation of woman in household decisions; iii. sex imbalances affect the perception of gender roles; and iv. economic growth reduces the likelihood of suffering sexual violence. To check the robustness of these results to unobserved time-variant variables, a novel bounding technique developed by Oster is implemented. The results suggest that the estimates are robust to omitted variable bias.

Monetary Transfers and Domestic Violence in Mexico

One of four women experience intimate partner violence in Mexico. I provide evidence of the effects of cash transfers (remittances and conditional cash transfers) on domestic violence by exploiting a national-state representative survey specialized in domestic violence in Mexico. I find that receiving remittances increases the likelihood of domestic violence by 6.2 percentage points; yet, I do not find evidence that conditional cash transfers affect domestic violence. In addition, I find a strong association between households that receive remittances and husbands who do not work. This suggests that spouses, in order to compensate the lack of income within the household, potentially exercise violence to extract part of the remittances in possession of the wives.

NATURAL DISASTERS

War on Drugs vs. Natural Disasters: Which Affects More Household Decisions?

Under review

This paper estimates the effects of Mexico's war on drugs and natural disasters on consumption, assets, credit, children's employment, school attendance, and use of time. Using fixed-effects models, the results suggest that: i. there is no effect of violence and natural disasters on consumption; and ii. families smooth their consumption affecting their children's human capital instead of using assets or getting more credits. Yet, the way they affect the children's human capital depends on the type of shock. The violence increases children's labor supply (particularly males) and the natural disasters decrease school attendance. Finally, a different effect of these shocks on the use of time is observed. While the violence increases the time spent on household activities, the natural disasters decrease the time spent on household activities. In summary, natural disasters and the war on drugs affect the decisions of households; yet, they each affect the decisions of households differently.

The impact of Earthquakes on Mental Health (with Juan Enrique Huerta-Wong, Julieth Santamaria, and Isidro Soloaga)

This paper analyzes the effects of earthquakes that impacted Mexico on women's mental health and substance abuse in 2017. Using a difference-in-differences approach we find: i. the earthquakes have negative consequences on women's mental health; ii. we do not find evidence that the earthquakes increased the consumption of alcohol or cigarettes; iii. we find evidence of factors that worsen women's mental health (such as perception of insecurity), and others that help women to be more resilient (such as family size); and iv. women who received psychological support improved some measures of mental health, yet we do not observe this result for all the measures analyzed. It is estimated that 27% of the population in Mexico is exposed to earthquakes. To face this situation, the Mexican government has implemented the Fund for Natural Disasters (FONDEN). This fund is used to distribute food and money for reconstruction. Yet, it is necessary to analyze the possibility of extending its support to the attention of mental health.

Are Your Children More Aggressive After a Natural Disaster?

After a natural disaster, the scarcity of resources increases, potentially generating stress and aggressive behavior among the members of the community. Yet, it has also been observed that in situations that put the lives of individuals at risk, they tend to cooperate more and being less aggressive. Many of these evidence came from analyzing adults, but little is known about aggressive behavior among young people exposed to natural disasters. This paper analyzes the effects of natural disasters on aggressive behavior in young people between 13 and 18 years old in Mexico. Using a test that measures aggressive behavior (Achenbach, 2001), combined with data regarding natural disasters, I find: 1. exposure to natural disasters diminishes aggressive behavior among young people; 2. I do not find heterogeneous results by sex or age; yet, I find evidence of heterogeneous effects by number of siblings (the greater the number of siblings the greater the decrease in aggressiveness when facing a natural disaster); and 3. these results are mainly driven by hydrometeorological, earthquakes, and droughts (which are the most common natural disasters in Mexico). Yet, I also find evidence that in the case of less common natural disasters (such as tornadoes), the effect on aggressiveness tends to be positive.