

Christopher Oconnor

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EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION	The University of Alabama PhD in Economics 2017 – Expected Spring 2022 - Dissertation: “Three Essays in Resilience, Vulnerability and Inequality” - Committee: Dr Peter Brummund (Chair), Dr Cary Deck, Dr Paul Pecorino, Dr Traviss Cassidy, Dr Gary Hoover (Tulane University)	
	MA in Economics	2017 – 2019
	The University of the West Indies, Mona (Jamaica) MSc in Economics 2011 – 2013 BSc in Economics 2008 – 2011 BSc in Statistics 2008 – 2011	
	Certification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “CITI Certificate – Non-Medical Investigators (2019)”. Tuscaloosa, AL • “Impact Evaluation for Productive Sector Projects (2015)”. Compete Caribbean (Inter-American Development Bank), Barbados • “Economic Development Strategy (2015)”. Korea International Cooperation Agency, Republic of Korea • “Making Effective Public Policy (2014)”. Management Institute for National Development, Jamaica 	
RESEARCH INTERESTS	Development Economics, Applied Microeconomics, Experimental Economics, Public Economics	
PUBLISHED/ACCEPTED RESEARCH	A Living Wage for Jamaica: Considerations for Calculation and Implementation (with Lauren Marsh and Danny Roberts). <i>Social and Economic Studies</i> , 2017, Vol 66(1&2). “An Examination of the Effect of Inequality on Lotteries for Funding Public Goods.” (with Cary Deck and Li Zhang), <i>Accepted: Journal of Public Economic Theory</i> (March 2022) - Summary: We experimentally study the impact of inequality on the effectiveness of contests for funding public goods in a development context. We observe that the typical result of a lottery funding mechanism leading to greater funding for the public good than predicted by theory extends to groups with inequality. However, while theory suggests that increased inequality should lower total contributions to a lottery funded public good, we observe the opposite pattern. This result differs from prior results for the standard voluntary contribution mechanism where increased inequality has been found to reduce public good provision. Moreover, we find that the poor do not contribute a greater share of their endowment to the public good than do the wealthy. Thus, overall our study demonstrates the potential for community development projects, when funded with a lottery mechanism, to be highly successful even in the presence of inequality and that they may even facilitate a progressive redistribution of wealth.	

WORKING
PAPERS

“Robust Estimates of Vulnerability to Poverty using Quantile Estimators.” *Submitted, April 2022*
- Summary: I propose an alternative empirical strategy—based on estimated medians with quantile regression—to standard strategies that identify individuals/households that are vulnerable to future episodes of poverty. This methodology is robust to measurement error and outliers; it is more accurate and relies on fewer assumptions than current mean-based methodologies and so facilitate more efficient use of scarce resources; and it is simple to implement which allows easy adoption by policymakers. Moreover, this methodology is shown to provide more dynamic information about household welfare than the static poverty rate. Applying this strategy to data from Uganda to illustrate its usefulness, I find that it more accurately identifies the future poor among the general population. The accuracy is highlighted in the fact that 1 in 2 households identified as vulnerable using the median strategy were poor within 1-3 years after being identified as vulnerable compared with 1 in 5 households using mean-based empirical strategies.

“Do Conditional Cash Transfers Create Resilience Against Poverty? Long-run Evidence From Jamaica”. *Submitted, March 2022*
- Summary: Conditional Cash Transfer programs (CCT) have become the prominent component of social assistance programs in many developing countries. A major objective of CCT programs is breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty and building a population resilient to adverse shocks that may push a person into poverty. Yet, there is no previous study that has assessed the long-run impact of CCT programs on beneficiaries’ resilience against poverty. To fill this gap, I exploit the age-based eligibility thresholds and regional variation in exposure to the Jamaican CCT program to identify its long-run impact on resilience against poverty. I find that child beneficiaries of the program are 11.5 percentage points more resilience against poverty when they become adults than they would have been in the absence of the program. Moreover, these benefits are realized after the beneficiary is in their early 20’s, when they have become more integrated into the labor market. Overall, this study provides further justification for the expansion of CCTs or similar programs targeting children living in less-developed countries.

WORKS IN
PROGRESS

“Determining Vulnerable to Poverty Thresholds using Machine Learning Models”

“A Utility Consistent Vulnerability as Expected Poverty Index”

“Why do people really remain poor?”

“Neighborhood Effects on Earnings Distributions”

TEACHING
EXPERIENCE

Instructor, The University of Alabama
Intermediate Microeconomics

2022 Spring - evaluation pending
2021 Fall - (4.29/5)
2021 Summer - (4.68/5)
2020 Fall (online) - (4.57/5)
2020 Summer (Online) (4.57/5)
2019 Summer (4.92/5)

Instructor, The University of the West Indies
Introductory Statistics

Summer 2013

Teaching Assistant, The University of Alabama	
<i>Macroeconomic Theory (Masters)</i>	Spring 2021
<i>Managerial Economics (Masters)</i>	Spring 2021
<i>International Trade (Undergrad and Masters)</i>	Spring 2019 and 2020
<i>Game Theory</i>	Spring 2020
<i>Econometrics</i>	Fall 2019
<i>Intermediate Macroeconomics</i>	Spring 2019
<i>Principles of Microeconomics</i>	Fall 2017, 2018 and 2019
<i>Principles of Macroeconomics</i>	Spring 2018, 2019
<i>Business Finance</i>	Summer 2018
<i>Financial Analysis and Modelling</i>	Summer 2018

OTHER
PROFESSIONAL
EXPERIENCE

Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), St Andrew, Jamaica
Policy Analyst/Economist in poverty and inequality 2013 – 2017

Caribbean Local Economic Development Program, Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Short-term consultant (Jamaica) 2013

CONFERENCE
PRESENTATIONS

- Public Choice Society Meeting. Nashville, Tennessee (upcoming 2022)
- ACM conference on Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization. Online (2021)
- EFLS brown bag, University of Alabama. Tuscaloosa, Alabama. (2021)
- Southern Economic Association 91st Annual Meeting. Houston, Texas (2021).
- Association for Mentoring and Inclusion in Economics (AMIE). Online (2021)
- Southern Economic Association 90th Annual Meeting. Online (2020).
- 8th Annual Caribbean Child Research Conference. Kingston, Jamaica (2015).7).

CONFERENCE
ATTENDANCE

- 4th High Level Meeting of the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network, Acapulco, Mexico (2016).
- 9th Annual Caribbean Child Research Conference, Kingston, Jamaica (2016)
- 4th Annual National Health Research Conference, Kingston, Jamaica (2014)

REPORTS

- “*Household Consumption*” in the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (JSLC) 2012, 2013 and 2014.
- “*Westmoreland Modified Local Area Economic Profile (LEAP)*” (2013): for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ (FCM) Caribbean Local Economic Development Programme.

MEMBERSHIPS

- Southern Economic Association (current)
- African American Graduate Student Association, University of Alabama (Current)
- Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions committee, PIOJ (Jamaica, 2013-2017).
- Research Ethics Committee, Ministry of National Security (Jamaica, 2013-2017).
- Technical Working Group for the revision of the poverty measurement methodology, PIOJ (Jamaica, 2013-2017).
- Jamaica Poverty Mapping Committee, PIOJ (Jamaica, 2013-2017).

AWARDS AND
ACHIEVEMENTS

- Finalist, Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition, UA (2021)
- Summer Research Grant: Dept. of Economics, Finance and Legal Studies, UA (2021)
- Development Bank of Jamaica Scholarship for excellence in academics, UWI Mona (2009-2011)
- WIGUT Bursary for excellence in academics, UWI Mona (2009-2011)
- NWC Cooperative Credit Union Scholarship for excellence in academics, UWI Mona (2008-2011)

TECHNICAL SKILLS • Proficient in Stata, z-Tree, SPSS and L^AT_EX.
• Working Knowledge of R, MATLAB, SAS, EVIEWS, HTML and CSS.

REFERENCES

Peter Brummund (Dissertation Chair)

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The University of Alabama
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Cary A. Deck

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