

WEI-LIN CHEN

CONTACT INFORMATION

Taipei School of Economics and Political Science	Phone: (+886) -3-5715131 ext. 35922
National Tsing Hua University, 101 Section 2, Kuang-Fu Road	Email: weilinchen@mx.nthu.edu.tw
Hsinchu, 300044, Taiwan, R.O.C.	Website: www.weilinchen.com

EMPLOYMENT

2026 August-	Assistant Professor	Taipei School of Economics and Political Science, National Tsing Hua University
2023 Nov- 2026 May	Postdoctoral Research Fellow	New Zealand Policy Research Institute, Auckland University of Technology

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, 2023	University of California - San Diego Committee: Julie Cullen (co-chair), Paul Niehaus (co-chair), Samuel Bazzi, Gordon Dahl, Jeffrey Clemens, Craig McIntosh
M.A., Economics, 2017	National Taiwan University
Visiting Student, 2017	University of California - Berkeley
B.A., Economics, 2013	National Taiwan University

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Public Economics, Labor Economics, Development Economics, Political Economy

I focus on three topics:

- The importance of leaders in local public goods provision (in the context of U.S. policing)
- The role of algorithms in social service targeting (in Indonesia and Taiwan)
- Local public finance in middle-and low-income countries (in the context of local taxation, subsidy provision, and intergovernmental transfer in Indonesia)

HONORS AND AWARDS

TA Excellence Award. 2019, 2021. University of California - San Diego.
Government Scholarship to Study Abroad. 2021. The Ministry of Education, Taiwan.
Emerging Researcher Award. 2025. interRAI New Zealand

WORKING PAPER

Political Party Affiliation of Leaders and Traffic Stop Policing: Evidence from North Carolina

Presentations: WEAI Economics of Crime Workshop, Taiwan Economics Research workshop, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand Association of Economists Annual Conference, Econometric Society Australasia Meeting, Hitotsubashi University, Tohoku University

Abstract: I study how the party affiliation of elected sheriffs affects traffic stop enforcement in North Carolina. Using a difference-in-differences design, I find that Democratic-to-Republican sheriff turnovers, compared to Democratic-to-Democratic transitions, increase the share of Black drivers in traffic stops by 3.8 percentage points (15.7%). The increase is concentrated in moving-violation stops and reflects both broad changes among incumbent officers and personnel reshuffling. Racial disparities in searches widen within moving-violation stops, while unconditional contraband finding rates and vehicle crash counts remain unchanged. Overall, the results underscore the role of leadership in shaping frontline policing.

Political Party Affiliation of Leaders and Personnel Composition: Evidence from North Carolina

Joint with Samuel Krumholz — *Draft available upon request*

Presentations: Taiwan Economics Research workshop, Australia New Zealand Econometric Study Group Meeting (ANZESG)

Abstract: We study the impact of partisan leaders on the political composition of law enforcement agencies in the United States using elected sheriffs in North Carolina as a case study. Using a difference-in-differences design, we find that offices shifting from a Democrat to a Republican sheriff experience a 6.8 percentage point (18%) decrease in the Democratic share of sheriff deputies relative to counties experiencing no party turnovers in the sheriff's party affiliation. This change is driven both by existing Democratic deputies disproportionately leaving the agency and changing their party registration. We do not find significant changes in the race and gender composition of deputies. Decomposing the political party composition along race and gender dimensions, we find that the changes are driven entirely within White officers (84% of the personnel). Changes within male (83% of the personnel) and female officers contribute proportionally to the overall changes.

PUBLICATIONS

Curriculum and National Identity: Evidence from the 1997 Curriculum Reform in Taiwan

Joint with Ming-Jen Lin and Tzu-Ting Yang — *Journal of Development Economics*, 2023

Abstract: This paper examines the causal effects of textbook content on individuals' national identity by exploiting a curriculum reform that introduced a new perspective on Taiwan's history for students entering junior high school after September 1997. Using a repeated nationally representative survey and a regression discontinuity design, we show that students exposed to the new textbooks were more likely to hold exclusive Taiwanese identity rather than dual identity (i.e., Taiwanese and Chinese). The effect was greater for academic track students and those living in neighborhoods where fewer people identify as Taiwanese. In addition, our results suggest that the new curriculum had little impact on people's political preferences related to Taiwan's independence. Finally, we find that the probability of reporting as Taiwanese among old textbook readers converges with that of people reading new textbooks in the long run since the perspectives of old textbooks are in conflict with the recent social trends.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Disparate Impact of Social Safety Net Inclusion on Internal Migrants in Indonesia

Abstract: Discussion of targeting the poor mostly focuses on the performance of specific methods on the *general* population, while the performance *across groups* is rarely examined. This project examines the performance of the proxy-means-testing (PMT) algorithms across internal migrants and locals in Indonesia. Using the same household expenditure sample and household characteristic variables, I reproduce the PMT algorithm adopted by the Indonesian central government. I find that, conditional on the same true household expenditure level, the PMT algorithm over-predicts internal migrants' expenditure compared to locals. Zooming in on the poor households the central government aims to target, whose expenditure falls within the bottom 25% of the population, the PMT algorithm's over-prediction results in an 8 percentage-point increase in exclusion error for migrants compared to locals. Preliminary analysis indicates that among the PMT variables, household head education and occupation, as well as residential neighborhood characteristics, contribute the most to the over-prediction bias. Future work will explore whether the second stage of targeting—discretionary targeting by local village heads—mitigates or worsens the disparities introduced by the algorithm.

Targeting on the Boundary: Improving Composite Scores through Multi-Dimensional Regression Discontinuity Designs

Joint with Kuan-Ming Chen and Yu-Chang Chen

Abstract: Composite scores are widely used to allocate resources and target services, for example, proxy-means tests in social protection programs or risk-assessment scales in health and social services. Existing empirical work focuses on the one-dimensional composite score and estimates average treatment effects at the cutoff. We propose a new approach that exploits the underlying multi-dimensional score construction and estimates conditional treatment effects along the entire classification boundary in the input space. Heterogeneity along this boundary signals that the weights of the input variables are not efficient for targeting. In such cases, reweighting can increase welfare by reallocating treatment toward individuals with higher treatment effects. We illustrate the method using Taiwan's Intimate Partner Violence Danger Assessment (TIPVDA), an 18-item risk scale used by social workers to classify high-risk domestic violence reports. We have secured linked administrative data that include (i) the item-level TIPVDA responses, (ii) social-worker treatment decisions, (iii) health-care utilization from the National Health Insurance system, and (iv) earnings from tax records.

Algorithmic Risk Scores and Targeting in Social Services: Evidence from Elder Abuse Cases in Taiwan

Joint with Harrison Chang, Shiau-Fang Chao, and Kuan-Ming Chen

Abstract: Governments increasingly deploy algorithmic risk scores to help social workers make frontline decisions in health and social services. We study the introduction of an ML-based risk classification system in Taiwan's elder abuse service workflow in 2020. Social workers receive a case-level risk category (high, medium, or low) derived from visit information and administrative data. The risk category is intended to inform follow-up service decisions. We study how this tool shapes frontline decision-making and service allocation. First, we test whether social workers' service provision decisions respond to the algorithm's risk categories. Leveraging the algorithm's score thresholds, we implement a regression discontinuity design to estimate the causal effects of follow-up services on elders' long-term health outcomes. Second, we examine how the introduction of algorithmic risk classification altered patterns of resource allocation across cases and whether the tool's influence differs by worker experience. We have secured linked administrative data that includes (i) the inputs to the ML algorithm, (ii) the algorithm itself and the risk category thresholds, (iii) social worker follow-up decisions, and (iv) health-care utilization from the National Health Insurance system, and we are currently processing the data for analysis.

Electoral Cycles of Informal Taxation and Welfare Benefit Provision: Evidence from Indonesian Villages

Presentations: Southeast Asia Research Group (SEAREG) winter conference

Abstract: This paper studies the impact of electoral incentives on frontline public finance arrangements. I examine the electoral cycles of informal tax collection and rice subsidy provision in Indonesian villages. In the election year, lower-expenditure households pay less in informal taxes, and average households receive more subsidized rice. As a result, village heads make the informal tax system more progressive and reduce overall leakage in the subsidy program right before the village head elections. The results suggest that electoral incentives faced by local agents are important in shaping the local public finance system.

Decentralizing Development: Structural Transformation Effects of Indonesia's Village Fund

Joint with Holt Dwyer

Abstract: Local infrastructure is a critical input to economic development, yet in many low- and middle-income countries it remains scarce due to limited fiscal capacity. This project examines whether expanding local fiscal resources fosters growth, and through which mechanisms, by studying Indonesia's Village Fund program (Dana Desa). The program's allocation formula placed heavy weight on a fixed per-village component, thereby generating substantial quasi-random variation in per-capita transfers. Currently, we analyze at the district level. Exploiting variation in the number of villages per capita, we use a continuous difference-in-differences design to estimate the causal impacts of the transfer on local government spending and the fiscal multipliers on household consumption. We are extending the analysis to examine village-level infrastructure, land use, and deforestation outcomes to trace how fiscal resources translate into production and environmental changes. This project contributes to understanding how expanding fiscal capacity shapes local economic activity and provides one of the first estimates of fiscal multipliers using within-country variation in middle- and low-income countries.

POLICY WORK**NATIONAL STUDY OF ABUSE OF OLDER PEOPLE: Evidence from the Integrated Data Infrastructure**

Joint with Rebecca Benson, Lisa Meehan, Ayesha Scott, and Denise Wilson — *forthcoming*

Prepared for the Ministry of Social Development by the New Zealand Policy Research Institute, AUT

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**Presentations**

- 2025 Hitotsubashi University, Tohoku University, interRAI Knowledge Exchange, Australia New Zealand Econometric Study Group Meeting (ANZESG), New Zealand Association of Economists Annual Conference
- 2024 Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand Association of Economists Annual Conference, Taiwan Economics Research workshop, Econometric Society Australasia Meeting
- 2023 Taiwan Economics Research workshop, WEAI Economics of Crime Workshop; Southeast Asia Research Group (SEAREG) winter conference
- 2021 Economics Graduate Student Conference (EGSC), Washington University in St. Louis

Referee Service

Review of Economics and Statistics, Journal of Development Economics, Economic Journal, Economic Inquiry, Pacific Economic Review, Economic Modelling

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, UC San Diego

Middle East Economics	Spring 2019; Winter/Spring/Fall 2020; Winter 2022 (Prof. James E. Rauch)
Cities, Inequality, Innovation	Spring 2021 (Prof. Fabian Eckert)
The Indian Economy	Spring 2023 (Prof. Karthik Muralidharan)
Public Economics: Expenditure II	Winter 2021 (Prof. Itzik Fadlon)
Economics of the Environment	Fall 2021 (Prof. Mark R. Jacobsen)
Economics of Education	Fall 2018 (Prof. Julian Robert Betts)
Principles of Macroeconomics	Winter 2019, Winter 2023 (Prof. Valerie A. Ramey)
Long Run Macroeconomics	Spring 2022 (Prof. Giacomo Rondina)

Courses Prepared to Teach

Undergraduate	Principles of Economics, Public Policy Analysis, Econometrics, Public Economics, Labor Economics, Development Economics
Graduate	Public Economics, Labor Economics, Development Economics

OTHER INFORMATION

Citizenship: Taiwan

Languages: Mandarin (Native), Taiwanese Hokkien (Native), English (Proficient)

Technical Skills: Stata, Python (basic), Matlab (basic), SQL, L^AT_EX