

American Economic Journal: Applied Economics

The *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* (*AEJ Applied*) publishes papers on a wide range of topics in applied economics, with a focus on empirical papers.

The journal covers (in alphabetical order) development microeconomics, economic history, economics of the family, education, environmental economics, health economics, labor economics, law and economics, political economy, and urban economics as well as empirical studies in behavioral economics, firm behavior, and trade.

The distribution of papers published in *AEJ Applied* in 2020 based on JEL codes can be found in Table 1. The most commonly represented fields are health, labor, and development economics (as well as “microeconomics,” which is a bit of a catchall). More generally, Table 1 indicates the broad diversity of papers covered in the journal. Editors look for papers that make important substantive contributions and, for empirical papers, those that have the highest empirical standards.

Table 2 shows the distribution of papers submitted to the journal since its inception. In 2020, the journal had 818 new submissions, just ahead of the previous record in 2018. We published 43 papers.

The journal currently has six coeditors (including myself). Camille Landais joined the journal as a coeditor in the spring, replacing Alex Mas.

Editorial Process

Manuscripts submitted to *AEJ Applied* are handled by an editor (Benjamin Olken) and five coeditors: David Deming, Seema Jayachandran, Ilyana Kuziemko, Camille Landais, and Neale Mahoney. After being processed by the publications office staff, the manuscripts are allocated by the editor to one of the coeditors based on fields of interest. The assigned coeditor then takes full responsibility for handling the paper, including the decision of whether to summarily reject the paper or send it to reviewers, the selection and

TABLE 1—SUBJECT MATTER OF PUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS
(COUNTS OF AREAS)

Subject category	2020
A—General economics and teaching	1
B—History of economic thought, methodology, and heterodox approaches	0
C—Mathematical and quantitative methods	5
D—Microeconomics	16
E—Macroeconomics and monetary economics	1
F—International economics	2
G—Financial economics	4
H—Public economics	9
I—Health, education, and welfare	13
J—Labor and demographic economics	20
K—Law and economics	4
L—Industrial organization	9
M—Business administration and business economics; marketing; accounting	3
N—Economic history	3
O—Economic development, technological change, and growth	14
P—Economic systems	0
Q—Agricultural and natural resource economics; environmental and ecological economics	7
R—Urban, rural, and regional economics	9
Y—Miscellaneous categories	0
Z—Other special topics	4

Notes: Derived from JEL codes reported for each manuscript submitted to *AEJ Applied*. Entries represent totals for the January, April, July, and October issues.

number of reviewers to use, and the ultimate disposition of the paper. Submissions that are summarily rejected are refunded 50 percent of their submission fee, consistent with AEA policy.

We require that the handling coeditor consult with a second coeditor before issuing a “revise and resubmit” decision; these consultations are also used in close cases as well. We specify the coeditor consulted by name in all decision letters whenever a second coeditor has been consulted. Reviewers remain anonymous to authors, of course. We have adopted the conflict of interest

TABLE 2—MANUSCRIPTS SUBMITTED AND PUBLISHED, 2007–2020

Year	Submitted	Published	Previously submitted to the <i>AER</i>		Previously submitted to <i>AER: Insights</i>	
			Submitted	Published	Submitted	Published
2007	69	0	5	—	—	—
2008	223	0	36	—	—	—
2009	345	34	36	—	—	—
2010	344	40	40	—	—	—
2011	384	36	33	—	—	—
2012	471	40	53	—	—	—
2013	525	38	44	—	—	—
2014	498	40	38	6	—	—
2015	559	35	39	5	—	—
2016	651	37	52	11	—	—
2017	782	42	60	21	—	—
2018	813	46	87	10	—	—
2019	790	46	89	16	11	—
2020	818	43	78	16	22	1

Notes: Submissions to *AEJ Applied* for each year include all new submissions from November 1 of the previous year through October 31 of the stated year. Publications for 2009 include the January and July issues. Publications for all following years include the January, April, July, and October issues.

guidance used by the *American Economic Review* (*AER*).

In coordination with the editors of the other *AEJ* journals, we instituted a slightly revised process for handling manuscripts that were previously submitted to the *AER* and *AER: Insights*. The goal of this change was to avoid authors spending excessive time responding to *AER/AER: Insights* reviewer comments in cases where such responses were not likely to be marginal for the decision. For both types of submissions, authors have the option of transferring the *AER/AER: Insights* editor letter, reviewer reports, and (with the reviewers' permission) reviewers' cover letters to the *AER/AER: Insights* editor. Authors then have a choice as to whether to submit the identical manuscript that was sent to the *AER/AER: Insights* or a revised manuscript. If the manuscript is identical, authors are asked to prepare a cover letter (typically no more than about five pages of text, plus no more than five tables or figures). In these cases, since the manuscript is the same as the one that was submitted to the *AER/AER: Insights* editors, *AEJ Applied* coeditors often can make a decision on their own without additional reviewer consultations. Alternatively, authors may submit a revised manuscript and a potentially longer cover letter/response to reviewers; in these cases, since the manuscript has changed, coeditors are more

likely to consult with reviewers before making a decision.

We see a substantial number of submissions using the transfer option. In 2020, 78 papers were submitted to *AEJ Applied* that had previously been submitted to the *AER*, and 22 papers were submitted that had previously been submitted to *AER: Insights*. We published 16 papers that were previously submitted to the *AER* and 1 paper that was previously an *AER: Insights* submission. We expect more publications from *AER: Insights* transfers moving forward.

Editorial Board

Associate editors are used by *AEJ Applied* coeditors as advisors, particularly in fields further from the coeditor's field of expertise, to decide whether to send manuscripts for review and, if so, to suggest reviewers. This practice helps broaden our expertise and reviewer pool.

The current editorial board includes the following associate editors:

Nava Ashraf (London School of Economics), Christopher Blattman (Chicago), Aimee Chin (Houston), Damon Clark (California, Irvine), Janet Currie (Princeton), Jan De Loecker (KU Leuven), Melissa Dell (Harvard),

TABLE 3—STATUS OF MANUSCRIPTS BY YEAR OF SUBMISSION, 2016–2020

Submission year	Accepted	Conditionally accepted	Pending	Rejected	Summary reject	Revise and resubmit	Withdrawn	Total
2016	50 (8)	— —	0 (0)	247 (38)	350 (54)	3 (0)	1 (0)	651 (100)
2017	61 (8)	— —	0 (0)	341 (44)	378 (48)	2 (0)	0 (0)	782 (100)
2018	41 (5)	1 (0)	2 (0)	315 (39)	448 (55)	4 (1)	1 (0)	812 (100)
2019	32 (4)	3 (0)	7 (1)	270 (34)	472 (60)	6 (1)	0 (0)	790 (100)
2020	4 (0)	1 (0)	97 (12)	218 (27)	479 (59)	19 (2)	0 (0)	818 (100)

Notes: Entries show status as of November 1, 2020. Figures in parentheses show row percents rounded to the nearest integer. Pending manuscripts include submissions and revisions that were undergoing review as of November 1, 2020, while revise and resubmit manuscripts are manuscripts that have been returned and are in the hands of the authors on that date. Summary rejections are manuscripts rejected without peer review.

Pascaline Dupas (Stanford), Frederico Finan (California, Berkeley), Nicole Fortin (British Columbia), Thomas Fujiwara (Princeton), Ben Handel (California, Berkeley), Rema Hanna (Harvard), Richard Hornbeck (Chicago), Patrick Kline (California, Berkeley), Victor Lavy (Warwick), Atif Mian (Princeton), Karthik Muralidharan (California, San Diego), Nancy Qian (Northwestern), Mar Reguant (Northwestern), Jonah Rockoff (Columbia Business School), Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach (Northwestern), Peter Schott (Yale), Alan Sorensen (Wisconsin), Tavneet Suri (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Miguel Urquiola (Columbia).

Editorial Data and Process

The ultimate publication rate was 5.0 percent for papers submitted in 2018. The disposition of all papers since 2016 is shown in Table 3.

AEJ Applied seeks to be known for quick turnaround of papers. The distribution of time to first decision is shown in Table 4. Our objective is to avoid papers older than three months. Focusing on 2019 submissions, which is the last year for which we have complete data, 85 percent of all papers received a first decision within this 3-month window. We are seeking to increase this percentage even further. Ninety-eight percent of papers are handled within 5 months, and we had no papers outstanding for more than 6 months.

We aim for a streamlined process at the revise and resubmit stage. Coeditors are asked to give precise guidance to authors, instructing them on which reviewer comments need to be addressed and which do not. We are often able to make decisions on revisions without consulting reviewers again. If this is clear ex ante, coeditors are asked to provide guidance to authors as to whether a paper will be sent back for review. Authors are also asked to submit their data archive in tandem with their submission.

The distribution of publication times is shown in Table 5. On net, for papers published in 2020, the mean time from submission to acceptance (for accepted papers) was 56 weeks.

Table 6 gives the average page length for manuscripts published from 2017–2020. Our average page length has remained steady at 32 pages.

AEJ Applied follows the *AER* data-posting policy. All data submissions are reviewed by the data editor prior to acceptance; for *AEJ Applied* this initial review happens at the revise and resubmit stage. Table 7 gives the statistics on data posting for 2020. All 43 published papers had data. Of these, 28 received an exemption on what they can post due to data confidentiality. Given the widespread and increasing use of restricted-use administrative data, the inability to publish data is not surprising.

On behalf of the all the coeditors, I thank Managing Editor Michelle DeBlasi and Editorial Assistant Kristina Kiritchenko for their terrific

TABLE 4—DISTRIBUTION OF FIRST DECISION TIMES BY SUBMISSION YEAR

Months to response	2018		2019		2020	
	Monthly percent	Cumulative percent	Monthly percent	Cumulative percent	Monthly percent	Cumulative percent
1	58	58	58	58	57	57
2	17	75	16	74	17	74
3	12	87	11	85	11	85
4	7	94	8	93	10	95
5	5	99	5	98	3	98
6	0	99	2	100	1	99
7	0	99	0	100	1	100
8	1	100	0	100	0	100
9	0	100	0	100	0	100
10	0	100	0	100	0	100
11	0	100	0	100	0	100
12	0	100	0	100	0	100

Notes: Submission year denotes the period from November 1 of the preceding year to October 31 of the stated year. The 2018–2019 distributions are the actual distributions. The 2020 distribution is projected from Kaplan–Meier hazards computed from the right-censored distribution of decision times of manuscripts submitted between November 1, 2019, and October 31, 2020. Percents are rounded to the nearest integer. Figures in this table supersede those contained in previous *AEJ Applied* reports.

TABLE 5—AVERAGE PROCESSING TIMES BY YEAR OF PUBLICATION

	Submission to acceptance			Weeks from acceptance to publication
	Total weeks	Weeks in review	Weeks in data review	
2017	43	17	—	42
2018	62	26	—	48
2019	53	11	—	51
2020	56	29	3	54

Note: Total weeks column shows the combined time a manuscript spent in review at *AEJ Applied* and the time taken by authors to develop their various revisions.

TABLE 6—ARTICLE LENGTH BY YEAR

	Number of articles	Average page length
2017	42	31
2018	46	35
2019	46	33
2020	43	32

Note: The table refers to the January, April, July, and October issues of *AEJ Applied*.

TABLE 7—2020 DATA-POSTING POLICY STATISTICS

Issue	Number of papers	Papers with data	Exemptions	
			Full	Partial
January	12	12	8	0
April	11	11	8	0
July	10	10	5	0
October	10	10	7	0
Total	43	43	28	0

work. Our editorial team works closely with Kristina in particular and relies on her timely, accurate, and helpful work to keep things running smoothly.

We also wish to thank all the reviewers whose speed and care make the journal possible. Finally, I thank my coeditors, David Deming, Seema Jayachandran, Ilyana Kuziemko, Camille Landais, and Neale Mahoney. I continually learn a tremendous amount from working together with them, and we are fortunate to have such a terrific team.

BENJAMIN OLKEN, *Editor*

AEJ APPLIED EXCELLENCE IN REVIEWING AWARD, 2020*

Amanda Agan	Vincent Pons	Alejandro Ganimian
Aaron Chalfin	Maria Sviatschi	Jacob Goldin
Steven Mello	Tom Vogl	Gaurav Khanna
Maya Rossin-Slater	Ebonya Washington	Ethan Lewis
Marcella Alsan	David Yang	Corinne Low
Martina Bjorkman Nyqvist	Hunt Allcott	Bhashkar Mazumder
Jeffrey Clemens	David Atkin	Maria Petrova
William Collins	Leah Boustan	Christopher Roth
Tatyana Deryugina	Gharad Bryan	Isaac Sorkin
James Feigenbaum	Davide Cantoni	Marianne Wanamaker
Andrew Goodman-Bacon	Jonathan Dingel	Crystal Yang
Tal Gross	Raymond Fisman	

*The reviewers included in this list have provided four or more high-quality and timely reports during the 2019 and 2020 calendar years, or have provided valuable assistance in particularly difficult cases.

ALL REVIEWERS, 2020

B. Abbott	G. Azmat	M. Bhuller	N. Buchmann	M. Clemens
L. Abraham	B. Ba	B. Biasi	K. Buckles	I. Clots-Figueras
A. Adams	N. Bachas	J. Bietenbeck	M. Burke	K. Coffman
M. Adelino	P. Bachas	S. Billings	L. Bursztyrn	J. Coglianese
A. Adhvaryu	A. Bacher-Hicks	D. Bjerk	T. Buser	J. Cohen
A. Agan	M. Bagues	A. Bjorklund	B. Bushong	W. Collins
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J. Aguirre	Y. Bai	Nyqvist	T. Byker	P. Combes
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A. Aizer	A. Baillon	C. Blattman	J. Cage	G. Conti
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M. Alsan	V. Bassi	B. Bollinger	F. Campante	D. Coviello
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S. Anderson	N. Baum-Snow	J. Boomhower	E. Cantoni	B. Crost
D. Ang	P. Bayer	S. Borenstein	A. Caria	C. Cruz
C. Angelucci	S. Bazzi	K. Borusyak	M. Carlana	D. Cuberes
M. Angelucci	B. Beach	L. Boustan	C. Carpenter	Z. Cullen
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N. Ashraf	A. BenYishay	A. Brodeur	T. Chang	J. Das
E. Atalay	Y. Benzarti	F. Brollo	M. Chen	C. de Chaisemartin
D. Atkin	P. Bergman	R. Brown	E. Chyn	G. De Giorgi
O. Attanasio	L. Bergquist	M. Bruhn	S. Cicala	A. de Paula
E. Aucejo	J. Berry	E. Brunner	E. Ciscato	J. de Quidt
E. Auriol	M. Best	S. Bruns	D. Clark	J. Dean
C. Avery	P. Bharadwaj	G. Bryan	J. Clemens	F. Decarolis

E. Del Bono	R. Garlick	J. Hunt	A. Langer	A. Menzel
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E. Derenoncourt	L. George	J. Hyman	T. Layton	C. Miller
T. Deryugina	F. Gerard	S. Imberman	L. Lefgren	S. Miller
O. Deschenes	C. Gibbs	C. Imbert	D. Lemoine	N. Mocan
E. Deserranno	Y. Giesing	N. Iriberry	S. Lenzu	M. Mohanan
M. Deshpande	D. Gill	S. Isaksson	K. Leonard	D. Molitor
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J. Dingel	J. Goldin	X. Jaravel	D. Li	E. Muehlegger
T. Dinkelman	F. Goncalves	T. Jaworski	C. Lieberman	A. Mueller
R. Dizon-Ross	F. Goncalves	A. Jena	E. Ligon	M. Mueller-Smith
Q. Do	Q. Gong	A. Jensen	A. Lindner	R. Murciano-Goroff
W. Dobbie	J. Goodman	A. Jensen	J. Lindo	A. Nagaraj
J. Doleac	A. Goodman-Bacon	C. Jepsen	E. Lindqvist	M. Nagler
K. Donovan	J. Grogger	R. Jia	B. Lockwood	S. Naidu
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H. Doucouliagos	T. Gross	D. Jo	M. Long	M. Neidell
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L. Edlund	W. Hanlon	R. Joyce	H. Macartney	P. Oliva
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K. Ericson	S. Hartzmark	M. Kapustin	S. Mani	O. Ozier
B. Erten	T. Hatton	L. Karabarbounis	D. Manoli	B. Ozler
W. Evans	J. Haushofer	A. Karimi	J. Marchand	A. Packham
B. Faber	C. Hausman	D. Keniston	I. Marinescu	J. Paetzold
I. Fadlon	K. Head	J. Kerwin	J. Marion	L. Page
R. Feenstra	S. Heller	G. Khanna	J. Marshall	M. Page
J. Feigenbaum	C. Helmers	C. Kinnan	G. Martin	C. Palmer
N. Feldman	E. Henry	J. Kinsler	J. Martinez	J. Pan
C. Ferraz	L. Hensvik	M. Kirchberger	B. Marx	E. Papaioannou
F. Ferreira	D. Herbst	B. Knight	A. Maurer	M. Paradisi
J. Feyrer	A. Heyes	C. Knittel	B. Mazumder	M. Parey
F. Finan	S. Higgins	M. Kolesar	I. Mbiti	J. Park
S. Fiorin	C. Hilber	P. Koudijs	N. McCarty	S. Park
S. Firpo	M. Hinnosaar	G. Kreindler	M. McConnell	J. Parman
P. Fishback	G. Hitsch	K. Kroft	C. McIntosh	M. Paserman
R. Fisman	R. Hjalmarsson	P. Krolikowski	M. McKelway	E. Patacchini
M. Fitzpatrick	J. Hjort	E. Kuka	D. McKenzie	R. Patterson
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A. Fradkin	M. Hoffman	J. Kung	K. Meckel	Z. Pei
T. Frattini	A. Hornstein	M. Kyle	N. Mehta	S. Perez
P. Funk	J. Horton	J. Lafortune	S. Meier	R. Perez-Truglia
J. Gallagher	W. Huang	D. Lagakos	S. Mello	F. Perrin
Y. Gallen	X. Huang	J. Lahey	N. Melnikov	C. Persico
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P. Garibaldi	P. Hull	X. Lan	X. Meng	M. Petrova

P. Pinotti	M. Rossin-Slater	M. Shum	M. Toma	J. Weaver
V. Pons	B. Roth	D. Silver	A. Torgovitsky	J. Weber
J. Ponticelli	C. Roth	A. Singh	F. Trebbi	M. Weinzierl
D. Pope	J. Rothstein	J. Singleton	U. Troiano	E. Weisburst
N. Pope	N. Roys	D. Slusky	L. Turner	J. Willis
M. Poyker	C. Ruhm	J. Smith	M. Turner	R. Wilson
C. Prendergast	F. Sa	J. Søggaard	C. Udry	L. Woessmann
L. Preonas	J. Saavedra	I. Sorkin	G. Ulyssea	T. Wollmann
B. Price	B. Sacerdote	D. Spears	M. Urquiola	M. Wong
J. Price	D. Sacks	J. Spiess	F. Valencia Caicedo	A. Wright
P. Profeta	E. Sadoulet	Y. Spitzer	G. van de Kuilen	D. Xu
V. Prowse	A. Salomons	J. Stearns	W. van Dijk	G. Xu
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B. Qin	A. Samek	A. Stern	J. van Ommeren	D. Yanagizawa-Drott
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P. Querubin	M. Sandner	A. Storeygard	S. Vasserman	D. Yang
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F. Rauch	F. Schilbach	M. Tabellini	T. Vogl	B. Zafar
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D. Rees	P. Schultz	L. Taylor	H. Voth	A. Zeitlin
P. Rhode	N. Seegert	A. Tesei	M. Walker	O. Zidar
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D. Ringo	J. Shapiro	M. Thomas	Y. Wang	U. Zoelitz
F. Robert-Nicoud	G. Shastry	O. Thompson	Z. Ward	
D. Robinson	A. Shenoy	M. Tincani	E. Washington	
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