Minimum wage policy and national culture
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Abstract

Minimum wage adjustment affects economic agent behaviors and leads to an unintended side effects. The first chapter of the dissertation studies the impact of the minimum wage level on the college enrollment. Using institution-level data from IPEDS, the results show that the real minimum wage level has significant and diverse effects on different types of enrollment. The results are robust using several alternative specifications and individual level analysis. The second chapter of the dissertation addresses another side effect of the minimum wage law: crime. Using U.S. state-level arrest and offense data and agency-level offense data, this chapter provides empirical evidence that an increase in the minimum wage leads to less crime. This effect mainly applies to adult but not to youth. The third chapter of the dissertation studied the impact of national culture on income inequality, especially Individualism vs. Collectivism aspect. Using a variety of empirical method to test the effect and mitigate the endogenous problem, the results show that collectivism societies are associated with higher income inequality and have higher wealth concentration on the richest population.