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DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS

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“Media Violence and Criminal Behavior: evidence from local movie demand”

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Abstract

We revisit the causal relationship between violent movie exposure and local crime documented in Dahl et al. (2009). We focus on a mismatch in the scope of the data between nationally measured movie demand and the limited coverage of crime data, as well as the restricted set of days of the week covered in the original dataset.

To address these issues, we replicate their study using 7-day data and a matched-market approach. Re-running the analysis, and also leveraging instrumental variable to address endogeneity, we find contrasting results with the prior study: violent movies have a non-significant, or even positive, effect on local crime occurrences. We further extend the analysis by estimating demand from local movie advertisements and provide an overview of advertising elasticity of movies.