

ECON4150 - Introductory Econometrics

Seminar 6

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Stock and Watson Chapter 10

Empirical exercise E10.1: Data

- Some U.S. states have enacted 'shall-issue' laws which allow citizens to carry concealed weapons.
- We are going to investigate the effect of shall-issue laws on violent crime rates.
- In this exercise we use the data set *Guns.dta*.
- This is a balanced panel of data on 50 US states, plus the District of Columbia for the years 1977 – 1999.
- There are a total of $51 \text{ states} \times 23 \text{ years} = 1173$ observations.
- These data were provided by Professor John Donohue of Stanford University.
- Data were used in the: "Shooting Down the 'More Guns Less Crime' Hypothesis" Stanford Law Review (2003)

Empirical exercise E10.1: Data

Variable Definitions

Variable	Definition
<i>vio</i>	violent crime rate (incidents per 100,000 members of the population)
<i>rob</i>	robbery rate (incidents per 100,000)
<i>mur</i>	murder rate (incidents per 100,000)
<i>shall</i>	= 1 if the state has a shall-carry law in effect in that year = 0 otherwise
<i>incarc_rate</i>	incarceration rate in the state in the previous year (sentenced prisoners per 100,000 residents; value for the previous year)
<i>density</i>	population per square mile of land area, divided by 1000
<i>avginc</i>	real per capita personal income in the state, in thousands of dollars
<i>pop</i>	state population, in millions of people
<i>pm1029</i>	percent of state population that is male, ages 10 to 29
<i>pw1064</i>	percent of state population that is white, ages 10 to 64
<i>pb1064</i>	percent of state population that is black, ages 10 to 64
<i>stateid</i>	ID number of states (Alabama = 1, Alaska = 2, etc.)
<i>year</i>	Year (1977-1999)

Empirical exercise E10.1: Data

```
. sum vio mur rob shall incarc_rate pb1064 pw1064 pm1029 pop avginc density stateid year
```

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
vio	1173	503.0747	334.2772	47	2921.8
mur	1173	7.665132	7.52271	.2	80.6
rob	1173	161.8202	170.51	6.4	1635.1
shall	1173	.2429668	.4290581	0	1
incarc_rate	1173	226.5797	178.8881	19	1913
pb1064	1173	5.336217	4.885688	.2482066	26.97957
pw1064	1173	62.94543	9.761527	21.78043	76.52575
pm1029	1173	16.08113	1.732143	12.21368	22.35269
pop	1173	4.816341	5.252115	.402753	33.14512
avginc	1173	13.7248	2.554543	8.554884	23.64671
density	1173	.3520382	1.355472	.0007071	11.10212
stateid	1173	28.96078	15.68352	1	56
year	1173	88	6.636079	77	99

Empirical exercise E10.1: part (a)

```
1 . gen ln_vio=ln(vio)
2 . regress ln_vio shall, robust
```

Linear regression

```
Number of obs =      1173
F( 1, 1171) =      86.86
Prob > F      =      0.0000
R-squared     =      0.0866
Root MSE     =      .61735
```

ln_vio	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
shall	-.4429646	.0475283	-9.32	0.000	-.5362148	-.3497144
_cons	6.134919	.0193039	317.81	0.000	6.097045	6.172793

Empirical exercise E10.1: part (a)

```
. regress ln_vio shall incarc_rate density avginc pop pbl064 pw1064 pml029, robust
```

Linear regression

```
Number of obs =      1173
F( 8, 1164) =      95.67
Prob > F      =      0.0000
R-squared     =      0.5643
Root MSE     =      .42769
```

ln_vio	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
shall	-.3683869	.0347879	-10.59	0.000	-.436641	-.3001329
incarc_rate	.0016126	.0001807	8.92	0.000	.0012581	.0019672
density	.0266885	.0143494	1.86	0.063	-.0014651	.054842
avginc	.0012051	.0072778	0.17	0.869	-.013074	.0154842
pop	.0427098	.0031466	13.57	0.000	.0365361	.0488836
pbl064	.0808526	.0199924	4.04	0.000	.0416274	.1200778
pw1064	.0312005	.0097271	3.21	0.001	.012116	.0502851
pml029	.0088709	.0120604	0.74	0.462	-.0147917	.0325334
_cons	2.981738	.6090198	4.90	0.000	1.786839	4.176638

- The coefficient equals -0.368, which suggests that shall-issue laws reduce the violent crime rate by 36%.
- This is a large effect.

Empirical exercise E10.1: part (a)

(1) Regression without control variables:

ln_vio	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
shall	-.4429646	.0475283	-9.32	0.000	-.5362148	-.3497144
_cons	6.134919	.0193039	317.81	0.000	6.097045	6.172793

(2) Regression with control variables

ln_vio	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
shall	-.3683869	.0347879	-10.59	0.000	-.436641	-.3001329

- The coefficient in (1) is $\hat{\beta}_{shall} = -0.443$; in (2) it is $\hat{\beta}_{shall} = -0.369$. Both are highly statistically significant.
- Adding the control variables results in a small drop in the estimated coefficient.
- Possible omitted variables that vary between states but not over time: Attitudes towards guns and crime, quality of police and other crime-prevention programs.

Empirical exercise E10.1: part (b)

```

1 . xtset state
      panel variable:   stateid (balanced)

2 . xtreg ln_vio shall incarc_rate density avginc pop pbl064 pwl064 pml029, fe robust

Fixed-effects (within) regression              Number of obs   =           1173
Group variable: stateid                      Number of groups =            51

R-sq:  within =  0.2178                      Obs per group:  min =           23
        between = 0.0033                      avg =           23.0
        overall = 0.0001                      max =           23

corr(u_i, Xb) = -0.3687                      F(8,50)         =           34.10
                                                Prob > F        =           0.0000

```

(Std. Err. adjusted for 51 clusters in stateid)

ln_vio	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
shall	-.0461415	.0417616	-1.10	0.275	-.1300222	.0377392
incarc_rate	-.000071	.0002504	-0.28	0.778	-.0005739	.0004318
density	-.17229	.1376128	-1.25	0.216	-.4486935	.1041135
avginc	-.0092037	.0129649	-0.71	0.481	-.0352445	.016837
pop	.0115247	.014224	0.81	0.422	-.0170452	.0400945
pbl064	.1042804	.0326849	3.19	0.002	.0386308	.16993
pwl064	.0408611	.0134585	3.04	0.004	.0138289	.0678932
pml029	-.0502725	.0206949	-2.43	0.019	-.0918394	-.0087057
_cons	3.866017	.7701057	5.02	0.000	2.319214	5.41282
sigma_u	.68024947					
sigma_e	.16072287					
rho	.94712778	(fraction of variance due to u_i)				

Empirical exercise E10.1: part (b)

- The results change when we add state fixed effects.
- The absolute value of the coefficient on shall falls to 0.046, a large reduction in the coefficient from 0.369 without fixed effects.
- Evidently there was important omitted variable bias in the specification without fixed effects.
- The estimate of the effect of shall issue laws on the violent crime rate is no longer statistically significantly different from zero
- The regression model with fixed effects is more credible because this controls for unobserved characteristics that vary between states but that are constant over time

1 . xi: xtreg ln_vio shall i.year incarc_rate density avginc pop pb1064 pm1029, fe robust
i.year _Iyear_77-99 (naturally coded; _Iyear_77 omitted)

Fixed-effects (within) regression Number of obs = 1173
Group variable: **stateid** Number of groups = 51

R-sq: within = **0.4180** Obs per group: min = 23
 between = **0.0419** avg = 23.0
 overall = **0.0009** max = 23

corr(u_i, Xb) = **-0.2929** F(30,50) = 56.86
 Prob > F = 0.0000

(Std. Err. adjusted for 51 clusters in stateid)

ln_vio	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
shall	-.0279935	.0407168	-0.69	0.495	-.1097757	.0537886
_Iyear_78	.0585261	.0161556	3.62	0.001	.0260767	.0909755
_Iyear_79	.1639486	.0244579	6.70	0.000	.1148234	.2130738
_Iyear_80	.2170759	.0334184	6.50	0.000	.1499531	.2841987
_Iyear_81	.2172551	.0391956	5.54	0.000	.1385284	.2959819
_Iyear_82	.1946328	.0465743	4.18	0.000	.1010856	.28818
_Iyear_83	.158645	.0593845	2.67	0.010	.0393676	.2779223
_Iyear_84	.1929883	.0770021	2.51	0.015	.0383251	.3476515
_Iyear_85	.2444765	.0922217	2.65	0.011	.0592438	.4297091
_Iyear_86	.3240904	.1089181	2.98	0.004	.1053219	.5428589
_Iyear_87	.324365	.1249881	2.60	0.012	.0733189	.5754111
_Iyear_88	.3867412	.1397074	2.77	0.008	.1061305	.6673518
_Iyear_89	.4422142	.1535358	2.88	0.006	.1338286	.7505999
_Iyear_90	.5430478	.1960859	2.77	0.008	.1491976	.936898
_Iyear_91	.5959456	.2040685	2.92	0.005	.1860619	1.005829
_Iyear_92	.6275171	.2170306	2.89	0.006	.1915982	1.063436
_Iyear_93	.6497414	.2246177	2.89	0.006	.1985834	1.100899
_Iyear_94	.6354187	.2332437	2.72	0.009	.1669349	1.103903
_Iyear_95	.6276831	.2423607	2.59	0.013	.1408874	1.114479
_Iyear_96	.5713423	.2534067	2.25	0.029	.06236	1.080325
_Iyear_97	.5501153	.2613516	2.10	0.040	.0251751	1.075056
_Iyear_98	.4932905	.2746546	1.80	0.079	-.0583696	1.044951
_Iyear_99	.4328777	.2862198	1.51	0.137	-.1420116	1.007767
incarc_rate	.000076	.0002079	0.37	0.716	-.0003416	.0004935
density	-.0915549	.1238622	-0.74	0.463	-.3403395	.1572297

Empirical exercise E10.1: part (c)

- The absolute value of the coefficient on shall falls further to 0.028, the coefficient is not significantly different from zero.
- The time effects are jointly statistically significant, so this regression seems better specified than the regression in part (b).

```
. test _Iyear_78= _Iyear_79= _Iyear_80= _Iyear_81= _Iyear_82= _Iyea
> r_83= _Iyear_84= _Iyear_85= _Iyear_86= _Iyear_87= _Iyear_88= _Iye
> ar_89= _Iyear_90= _Iyear_91= _Iyear_92= _Iyear_93= _Iyear_94= _Iy
> ear_95= _Iyear_96= _Iyear_97= _Iyear_98= _Iyear_99=0
```

```
( 1)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_79 = 0
( 2)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_80 = 0
( 3)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_81 = 0
( 4)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_82 = 0
( 5)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_83 = 0
( 6)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_84 = 0
( 7)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_85 = 0
( 8)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_86 = 0
( 9)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_87 = 0
(10)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_88 = 0
(11)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_89 = 0
(12)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_90 = 0
(13)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_91 = 0
(14)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_92 = 0
(15)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_93 = 0
(16)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_94 = 0
(17)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_95 = 0
(18)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_96 = 0
(19)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_97 = 0
(20)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_98 = 0
(21)  _Iyear_78 - _Iyear_99 = 0
(22)  _Iyear_78 = 0
```

```
F( 22,      50) =      21.62
    Prob > F =      0.0000
```

Empirical exercise E10.1: part (d)

Dependent variable is ln(rob)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
shall	-0.773*** (0.069)	-0.529*** (0.051)	-0.008 (0.055)	0.027 (0.052)
Control variables	-	yes	yes	yes
State fixed effects	-	-	yes	yes
Time fixed effects	-	-	-	yes
Dependent variable is ln(rob)				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
shall	-0.473*** (0.049)	-0.313*** (0.036)	-0.061 (0.037)	-0.015 (0.038)
Control variables	-	yes	yes	yes
State fixed effects	-	-	yes	yes
Time fixed effects	-	-	-	yes

The results are similar to the results using violent crimes:

- There is a large estimated effect of concealed weapons laws in specifications (1) and (2).
- This effect is however due to omitted variable bias because the effect disappears when state and time effects are added.

Empirical exercise E10.1: part (e)

Remaining threats to internal validity:

Omitted variables: There might be important variables that vary between states and over time that are omitted from the regression model. For example other policy measures that are related to the implementation of shall issue laws and that affect crime rates.

Simultaneous causality: If there are many violent crimes this may induce policy makers to change concealed weapons laws.

Empirical exercise E10.1: part (f)

- The most credible results include both state fixed effects and time fixed effects.
- These results indicate that there is no significant effect of concealed weapon laws on the violent crime rate, the robbery rate nor on the murder rate.