

22 September, 2023

Dear Dr. Del Pozo, Moskos, Donohue and Hall:

The Editorial Board of *The Economic Journal* met to discuss your recent communication regarding the 2022 article "The Effects of Adult Entertainment Establishments on Sex Crime: Evidence from New York City" by Riccardo Ciacci and Micaela Sviatschi (Volume 132, issue 641, pages 147-198).

The journal is a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and, as such, has agreed to follow their guidance, including their retraction guidelines. Most pertinent here is COPE's guidance that "Editors should consider retracting a publication if they have clear evidence that the findings are unreliable, either as a result of major error (e.g., miscalculation or experimental error), or as a result of fabrication (e.g., of data) or falsification (e.g., image manipulation)".

Based on our reading of the paper by Ciacci and Sviatschi, your criticism, and the authors' response to your criticism, our professional opinion is there are no major errors that warrant a retraction of the paper. Your criticism highlights that there is a wedge between what Ciacci and Sviatschi measured and a relevant theoretical measure, which is a potentially important observation. We do not consider the mere presence of imprecise measurement to be a "major error" or to necessarily imply that the data has no meaningful information. The paper's analysis and authors' responses suggest that there is meaningful – albeit noisy – information in the data used.

We can well conceive that there may be more to say on this topic. Indeed, there is a long tradition in Economics of writing comments (or even new, full papers) that question the conclusions of previous papers. The original work is often an important stepping-stone in the intellectual journey---one that future researchers can learn from. If better assumptions, better data, or improved statistical techniques weakened or reversed Ciacci and Sviatschi's conclusions, it would be prime material for a comment or new paper. We reiterate our prior invitation for you to submit such a comment or new paper to *The Economic Journal*.

Sincerely,

Francesco Lippi 

Editor in Chief (on behalf of the editorial board)