

Abstract

We quantify the impact of questions submitted by policymakers on the overtime work of Japanese government officials. We use mobile phone location data to measure the nighttime population in the government-office district at an hourly frequency. Our measure is much less vulnerable to measurement errors than reported overtime working hours. Exploiting the institutional constraints, we estimate re-sponses of the nighttime population to an exogenous increase in the number of questions submitted, by using the method of local projection. We find that, on average, overtime work initially decreases, and then persistently increases after the submission of the question. Relaxing the constraint mitigates the overtime work, but we still observe persistent increases in the overtime work.