

Beyond Information Provision: Trade Responses to Official U.S. Listings of Forced and Child Labor

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Abstract

This paper examines whether formal government designation affects economic behavior beyond the provision of new information. We address this question using the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL's) List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor, published under the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA), which identifies country–good pairs associated with child labor or forced labor. Combining the TVPRA List with bilateral trade data, we find that U.S. imports decline significantly following formal listing. We then use the DOL's bibliography of sources underlying its listing decisions to examine whether this response can be explained by prior public information or whether formal government designation plays an additional role.

Keywords: International trade; Information provision; Child labor; Forced labor; Naming and shaming; Government designation

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