

Robert J. R. Elliott

BA • MA • PhD

Professor of Economics

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PROFILE

I am an applied economist at the University of Birmingham, where I have worked since 2003 and have been Professor of Economics since 2010. My research sits at the intersection of international economics, environmental and energy economics, economic history and the economics of China, united by a long-standing interest in the economics of globalisation. Much of my recent work brings novel data — firm-level censuses, satellite imagery and machine learning — to bear on policy-relevant questions, from the economic effects of natural disasters to the critical-material supply chains and real-world longevity of electric vehicles. I am co-editor of *Environmental and Resource Economics* and Director of Research in the Department of Economics.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

2010–present	Professor of Economics , Department of Economics, University of Birmingham.
2007–2010	Reader, Department of Economics, University of Birmingham.
2003–2007	Senior Lecturer, Department of Economics, University of Birmingham.
2000–2003	Jean Monnet Professor in the Economics of European Integration, School of Economic Studies, University of Manchester.
1997–1999	Lecturer in Economics, Manchester Metropolitan University.

LEADERSHIP & UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION

2022–present	Director of Research , Department of Economics.
2009–2013	Head of Department, Economics.
until 2022	Founder and Lead, Trade, Environment, Development & Energy (TEDE) research group.
2013–2018	Director of Admissions and Recruitment.
2013–2016	Director of Education (Undergraduate Programme Lead).
2013–	Member, College Humanities & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee; member of the Digital Research Group and the University Ethics Committee.

EDUCATION

1994–1999	PhD , University of Nottingham. Thesis: <i>Industrial Specialisation and Adjustment in the European Union: Spatial and Structural Dimensions</i> (ESRC-funded; supervisor: Professor David Greenaway).
1991–1992	MA in Economics, University of Essex (funded by the European Social Fund).
1987–1990	BA (Hons) in Economics, University of Leicester.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- **International Trade & Globalisation.** Intra-industry trade and its consequences — firm-level importing and exporting, foreign investment, and labour-market adjustment.
- **Trade, Investment & the Environment.** The pollution-haven hypothesis, environmental regulation and industrial location, and the spatial pattern of firms' emissions.
- **Economics of China & East Asia.** Foreign investment, firm productivity, energy intensity, urbanisation, and the role of governance.
- **Energy & the Low-Carbon Transition.** Electricity reliability and firms, electric vehicles, critical materials and battery recycling.
- **Natural Disasters & Climate.** The economic consequences of typhoons, floods and wildfires, measured from outer space, and their effects on firms, prices and politics.
- **Economic History & Novel Data.** Machine learning and synthetic controls for air quality and policy evaluation, satellite imagery, and long-run historical datasets.

Google Scholar (April 2026): approximately 12,800 citations; h-index 57; i10-index 92. Among the most highly cited economists at the University of Birmingham.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

'Elliott' is shown in bold. A fuller record is available through the University of Birmingham research portal, RePEc/IDEAS and Google Scholar.

- Fumany, M., Nguyen-Tien, V., Li, N., **Elliott, R. J. R.** & Lander, L. (2026). The EV transition: the impact of the EU battery directive on critical material supply, recycling and battery costs. *Resources Policy*, 112, 105787. doi:10.1016/j.resourpol.2025.105787.
- Nguyen-Tien, V., Zhang, C., Strobl, E. & **Elliott, R. J. R.** (2025). The closing longevity gap between battery electric vehicles and internal combustion vehicles in Great Britain. *Nature Energy*, 10(3), 354–364. doi:10.1038/s41560-024-01698-1.
- Elliott, R. J. R.**, & Urquhart, A. (2025). Bitcoin research: what are the new frontiers? *Financial Review*, 60(4), 1121–1127. doi:10.1111/fire.70015.
- Shi, Z., Song, C., Liu, B., ... **Elliott, R. J. R.**, et al. (2021). Abrupt but smaller than expected changes in surface air quality attributable to COVID-19 lockdowns. *Science Advances*, 7(3), eabd6696. doi:10.1126/sciadv.abd6696.
- Elliott, R. J. R.**, Nguyen-Tien, V., Strobl, E. A. & Tveit, T. (2023). Climate-related natural disasters and voting behavior: evidence from environmental legislation in the US Senate. *Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists*, 10(3), 753–786. doi:10.1086/722540.
- Cole, M. A., **Elliott, R. J. R.** & Zhang, L. (2017). Foreign direct investment and the environment. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 42, 465–487. doi:10.1146/annurev-environ-102016-060916.
- Cole, M. A., **Elliott, R. J. R.**, Occhiali, G. & Strobl, E. (2018). Power outages and firm performance in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Development Economics*, 134, 150–159.
- Beltrán, A., Maddison, D. & **Elliott, R. J. R.** (2018). Is flood risk capitalised into property values? *Ecological Economics*, 146, 668–685.
- Elliott, R. J. R.**, Strobl, E. & Sun, P. (2015). The local impact of typhoons on economic activity in China: a view from outer space. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 88, 50–66.
- Cole, M. A., **Elliott, R. J. R.**, Okubo, T. & Zhou, Y. (2013). The carbon dioxide emissions of firms: a spatial analysis. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, 65(2), 290–309.
- Cole, M. A., **Elliott, R. J. R.** & Zhang, J. (2011). Growth, foreign direct investment, and the environment: evidence from Chinese cities. *Journal of Regional Science*, 51(1), 121–138. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9787.2010.00674.x.
- Jones, B., **Elliott, R. J. R.** & Nguyen-Tien, V. (2020). The EV revolution: the road ahead for critical raw materials demand. *Applied Energy*, 280, 115072.

RESEARCH GRANTS (SELECTED)

2025–2030 **INHABIT** — Medical Research Council (PI Zongbo Shi). Co-Investigator.

2024-2025	CCRA4 — UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, UK Government (approx. £200k).
2023-2025	The use of agents in international trade — Centre for Inclusive Trade Policy (CITP) (approx. £30k; PI Wanyu Chung).
2021-2023	UK-Taiwan networking grant — ESRC (approx. £30k; PI Wanyu Chung).
2019-2023	PyroLife — EU H2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie ITN (approx. EUR 4m; approx. £600k to Birmingham).
2018-2022	ReLIB — recycling lithium-ion batteries and critical-material supply chains, The Faraday Institution (approx. £150k for economics). Co-Investigator.
2017-2019	Regional climate extremes for China and East Asia — NERC (approx. £300k).
2010-2011	The Dynamics of International Trade: Sequencing, Experimenting and Quality — ESRC (approx. £94k). Principal Investigator.
2002-2004	Globalisation, Competitiveness and the Environment — ESRC (£40k; PI M. Cole). Co-Investigator; graded <i>Outstanding</i> .
2000-2002	Geographical Specialisation in the UK and the EU — ESRC (£96k). Principal Investigator; graded <i>Outstanding</i> .

DOCTORAL SUPERVISION

Current	Doctoral students working on, among others, the economic history of the Caribbean and of China; green finance and ESG in China; ESG and machine learning; urban and regional economics in Indonesia; a critical evaluation of cryptocurrencies; the economics of the electric-vehicle revolution in China; machine learning and environmental economics; and the economics of critical materials.
Completed	Over twenty-five doctoral students supervised to completion, with alumni now in academic and policy positions including the LSE, the University of Oxford, the University of Sussex, the University of Birmingham, the University of Bern, the UK Office for National Statistics, and universities in China, Italy and Thailand.

EDITORIAL & PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Editorial	Co-editor, <i>Environmental and Resource Economics</i> . Regular referee for leading journals across environmental, energy and international economics, and reviewer of ESRC grant applications and final reports.
Advisory	Adviser to HM Revenue & Customs on environmental taxation; member of the Commonwealth Scholarship board; member of the commissioning panel for the DFID-ESRC China and Africa research programme; consultancy for the European Commission and the Asian Development Bank (2022–2023).
Examining	External examiner at the University of Manchester (2023–), Lancaster University, the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University; external assessor and promotion adviser for the University of the West Indies, the LSE, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Quaid-i-Azam University (Pakistan), UTAR (Malaysia) and Nottingham Ningbo (China).
Committees	Scientific committee, EAERE and ETSG conferences; theme lead, Institute of Global Innovation (Water).

AFFILIATIONS

External Fellow, Leverhulme Centre for Research on Globalisation and Economic Policy (GEP), University of Nottingham.

Birmingham Energy Institute; Birmingham Institute for Sustainability and Climate Action; Institute for Interdisciplinary Data Science and AI, University of Birmingham.