

MERADEE TANGVATCHARAPONG

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics

Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

expected May 2021

M.A., Economics

University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan

March 2012

B.A., Economics

Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo, Japan

March 2010

RESEARCH FIELDS

Applied Microeconomics, Labor Economics, Economics of Education, Health Economics

WORKING PAPERS

The Impact of School Tracking and Peer Quality on Student Achievement: Regression Discontinuity Evidence from Thailand

A common educational practice around the world is to track students into classrooms based on ability. However, despite the popularity of tracking, relatively few papers directly identify the impact of being tracked into classrooms with higher or lower peer ability. This paper estimates the impact of being tracked into a classroom with higher ability peers by using data from public middle schools in Thailand, where students are tracked into classrooms based on a preliminary exam taken before 7th grade. Importantly, all teachers, curriculum, and textbooks are identical throughout classrooms. To distinguish the impact of peers from confounding factors due to selection, I apply a regression discontinuity design (RDD) that compares the academic outcomes of students just above and below the threshold. Results indicate that significant increases in peer quality do not improve student GPA. This suggests that any gains due to tracking, at least in Asian contexts similar to this, are likely due to factors other than peer quality, such as curriculum or teacher quality.

The Impact of Fake News: Evidence from the Anti-Vaccination Movement in the US

The increasing amount of fake news has generated significant debate about the proper role of government and social media platforms in combating it. However, little is known about whether fake news can actually change behavior. This paper addresses this question by examining how vaccination rates responded to the unexpected surge in media coverage in 2007 of the verifiably false claim that the MMR vaccine caused autism. Specifically, I use a difference-in-difference approach to compare the MMR vaccination rates of children whose parents were most and least likely to be affected by the news over time. I determine parents' susceptibility using three predetermined characteristics: whether their child is a firstborn, the child's gender, and the parents' age. Results show that susceptible parents were 3.3 percentage points less likely to vaccinate their children with an MMR shot by the recommended age of 15 months and 4.1 percentage points less likely to do so by 29 months. This indicates that at a minimum, fake news caused parents to delay vaccinating their children by over a year, and at most prevented them from ever immunizing their children.

An Empirical Test of Religious Discrimination (with Abigail Peralta)

New mosque openings are often contentious. While some cite noise, increasing traffic and criminal activities as reasons for opposing new mosques, proponents claim that opposition to mosques is driven by religious discrimination. In this paper, we test for revealed religious discrimination by estimating the effect of places of worship on home values in Michigan. To do so, we link administrative data on the universe of property transactions in Detroit and Hamtramck to the opening and closing dates of all places of worship. We then use a spatial difference-in-differences approach to compare sale prices over time of properties closer to newly opened religious institutions to properties that are slightly farther away. Unlike related studies using data from other areas, our preliminary results show that exposure to places of worship has no effect on housing prices, even for newly opened mosques.

Coase Bargaining Theorem in a Computer-Mediated Environment (with Catherine Eckel, Ryan Rholes, Jesse Backstrom)

This paper studies bargaining in the experimental laboratory to better understand how modern negotiating environments affect bargaining outcomes. We first establish baseline findings by replicating bargaining protocols introduced by Hoffman and Spitzer (1982, 1985), and then extend them to a computerized environment. We find that bargaining face-to-face yields a higher rate of efficient outcomes than does bargaining in a computerized negotiation environment. In addition, subjects become significantly more self-regarding when bargaining digitally, with distributions strongly favoring the holder of property rights.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

The Impact of Law Banning Landlords from Conducting Background Checks

The Impact of Increased Funding in the ESL Program (with Andrea Kelly)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record

ECON 459: Games & Economic Behavior *Summer 2020*

ECON 459: Games & Economic Behavior (Teaching Evaluation 4.69/5.00) *Fall 2018*

Teaching Assistant

ECMT 461: Economic Data Analysis *Spring 2020*

ECON 315: Sports Economics *Fall 2019*

ECMT 463: Introduction to Econometrics (Teaching Evaluation 4.52/5.00) *Fall 2019*

CONFERENCES

AEA American Economic Association *Poster, 2020*

— *selected to feature in the AEA Poster Session Videos*

SEA Southern Economic Association International *Presentation, 2019*

APPAM Association for Public Policy & Management *Presentation, 2019*

Stata TX Empirical Microeconomics Conference *Poster, 2019*

Texas A&M PLIO Alumni Conference *Presentation, 2019*

WEAI (International Conference) Western Economic Association International *Presentation, 2019*

AEA American Economic Association *Presentation, 2019*

SEA Southern Economic Association International *Presentation, 2018*

APPAM Association for Public Policy & Management *Poster, 2018*

WEAI Western Economic Association International *Presentation, 2018*

SAAER Symposium for Agricultural and Applied Economics Research *Presentation, 2018*

AAEA Agricultural and Applied Economics Association *Poster, 2017*

HONORS & AWARDS

Texas A&M Private Enterprise Research Center Summer Fellowship *Summer 2017*

Japanese Government (MEXT) Research Student Scholarship *2010-2012*

Japanese Government (MEXT) Undergraduate Student Scholarship *2005-2010*

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

Bangkok Bank PCL, Bangkok, Thailand

Dealer (Foreign Exchange) *2013-2015*

Assistant Dealer (Foreign Exchange) *2012-2013*

LANGUAGES

English, Japanese, Thai (Native)

REFERENCES

Mark Hoekstra (Chair)
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Andrew Barr
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