

MARGINAL MEMOS

Volume 62, Number 4, January 27, 2020
Editor: Sadie Brendalen

Environmental and Natural Resource Candidate Seminars

Casey Wichman, University of Chicago

"Do behavioral nudges interact with prevailing economic incentives? Pairing experimental and quasi-experimental evidence from water consumption."

Date: Monday, January 27

Time: 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Location: 119 Ruttan Hall

Abstract: Social comparisons are a popular behavioral nudge to change behavior, partially because raising prices can be politically difficult. In many settings, nudges may interact with prevailing prices, potentially crowding out intrinsic motivation to conserve or by increasing the salience of prices. We investigate the interaction of prices and nudges for water conservation in two experiments in neighboring utilities. First, we layer randomized behavioral treatments on top of variation in price driven by arbitrary lot-size thresholds that assign marginal prices to customers exogenously. Second, we explore whether behavioral treatments affect consumers' price sensitivity. We find no consistent evidence that social comparisons are more effective at inducing conservation at higher prices or that they increase consumers' price sensitivity. Ultimately, we find little empirical support that consumers respond to behavioral treatments due to private economic benefits.

Anouch Missirian, Columbia University

"Yes, in your backyard: Forced technological adoption and spatial externalities."

Date: Wednesday, January 29

Time: 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Location: 119 Ruttan Hall

Abstract: Diffusion of new technologies in competitive markets is often thought to be too slow relative to an optimal adoption trajectory due to learning-by-doing, learning-by-using, or network externalities. In this paper, in contrast, I study a phenomenon of hastened technology adoption facilitated by a negative spatial externality imposed by adopters on non-adopters. Focusing on new herbicide-tolerant seeds for soybean and cotton, I show that adoption by U.S. farmers was partly caused by wind carrying the drift-susceptible herbicide across plots. I estimate that being in the same wind corridor as an adopter increased the probability of adopting by about 29%. The externality also led to defensive adaptation: cropland was converted to crops able to withstand the herbicide, suggesting a form of protective land-use change to prevent damage. I then turn to broader consequences of the widespread adoption of the technology, including its

overall effect on yields. *A priori*, the effect on yields is ambiguous. I find that overall, yields remained practically unchanged, despite increased crop failure. The rapid diffusion of this new technology and the consequences highlighted here call for the careful consideration of policies to address such inventions and of their accompanying side-effects.

Opportunities

Global Poverty Research Lab Convention

The Global Poverty Research Lab is convening a meeting of interested researchers and funders of research **Thursday, April 23, 2020** at Northwestern University. Researchers interested in methodological and measurement work related to IPA's Research Methods Initiative's Themes are invited to attend.

The objectives of the meeting include:

- Discuss strategies and develop teams to leverage retrospective and/or prospective measurement or methodological research using IPA or existing survey data
- Prioritize research themes which teams of researchers or a research methods initiative should focus.
- Facilitate an informal conversation about measurement and methods by sharing work in progress and working papers. If you would like to discuss some of your recent measurement and methods work, please indicate this in your RSVP.

If you'd like to attend, **please RSVP by February 13** via email to susan.dennehy@kellogg.northwestern.edu.

This meeting will be organized around panel discussions focused on certain topics. If you'd like to serve as a panelist, please indicate in your RSVP what methods and measurement work you are interested in discussing, either your own or in general.

Jobs

Assistant/Associate Professor: NC State University

The Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources at NC State University invites applications for a 12-month, tenure-track Assistant/Associate Professor of Forest Resource Economics and to serve as Director of SOFAC. Requirements include a PhD in Forestry or Natural Resource Economics or closely related discipline. The realm of relevant research is broad and includes the impacts of shocks to forest extent and both market and non-market attributes of the southern forest ecosystem. SOFAC members include major corporate forest landowners and wood consumers, consulting firms, and the southern group of state foresters. These members provide a funding base for advancing research methodologies that address likely southern forest futures at a scale relevant for strategic decisions. This appointment is 45% research, 45% teaching and 10% service. The candidate must have a strong background in (i) forest economics, and (ii) analytical modeling that integrates forest biology and economics to guide strategic thinking of both public and private decision-makers, and (iii) strong leadership skills and forward-looking vision to lead SOFAC.

Apply online

Applied Environmental Economist: University of Hawaii-Manoa

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management (NREM) in the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) at the University of Hawaii Manoa seeks an applied environmental economist who will apply cutting edge modeling and statistical techniques as part of a novel, integrative research program that is relevant to the sustainability and resiliency of Hawaii and the Pacific Region. Our ideal colleague will contribute knowledge and tools that complement and strengthen the department, college, and university (e.g., data science, systems modeling, policy evaluation). The person will be excited to support undergraduate and graduate research and employment preparation by teaching analytical study designs (e.g., quasi-experimental techniques), statistical approaches (e.g., mixed effects models), and/or system modeling approaches (e.g. system behavior and structural equation modeling). This is a 9-month, tenure track position to be filled at the Assistant Professor level, with 60% teaching and 40% research responsibilities.

Apply online

Seminars in other departments

MPC Seminar

*Differential Privacy and the 2020
Dicennial Census*

David Van Riper, ISRDI
Monday, January 27
12:15 p.m.,
50 Willey Hall

MPC Workshop

*Understanding Research Impact
Metrics: When, Why, and How to Use
Them*

Jean McBurney and Allison Langham-
Putrow, UMN Libraries
Friday, January 31
12:15 p.m.,
50 Willey Hall

Federal Bag Lunch

Labor Market Flows and Development

Todd Schoellman, Federal Reserve
Bank of Minneapolis
Tuesday, January 28
12:00 p.m.
Research Conference Room

Federal Bag Lunch

Unbundling Labor

Simon Mongey, University of Chicago
Friday, January 31
12:00 p.m.
Research Conference Room

Departmental Publications

Frisvold, George B., Joshua Albright, David E. Ervin, Micheal D. K. Owen, Jason K. Norsworthy, Katherine E. Dentzman, Terrance M. Hurley, Raymond A. Jussaume, Jeffrey L. Gunsolus, and Wesley Everman. 2020. "Do Farmers Manage Weeds on Owned and Rented Land Differently? Evidence from U.S. Corn and Soybean Farms." *Pest Management Science*, January, ps.5737. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ps.5737>.

Roe, Terry, and Rodney Smith. 2019. "Linking Growth and Natural Capital in the Republic of Kazakhstan: A Case Study of Aral Sea." *In Mainstreaming Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services into Development Policy*, 60–103. Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9781315531212>.

Glewwe, Paul, Sylvie Lambert, and Qihui Chen. 2020. "Education Production Functions: Updated Evidence from Developing Countries." In *The Economics of Education: A Comprehensive Overview*, edited by Steve Bradley and Colin Green, 2nd ed., 183–216. Amsterdam: Elsevier Academic Press.



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