

Arianna Ornaghi

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Academic Positions

2019 - : British Academy Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Warwick, UK

2017 - 2019 : Research Fellow, University of Warwick, UK

Education

2012 - 2017 : Ph.D. Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA

2009 - 2011 : M.Sc. Economics and Social Sciences, Bocconi University, Italy

2006 - 2009 : B.Sc. Economics and Social Sciences, Bocconi University, Italy

Research Interests

Political Economy; Applied Microeconomics; Text Analysis

Working Papers

"Who Watches the Watchmen? Local News and Police Behavior in the United States." Joint with Nicola Mastroianni. July 2020.

Winner of the European Economic Association Young Economist Award 2020.

Job Market Paper.

Does media content influence local institutions? We study this question by looking at how a negative shock to local crime-related news, induced by the acquisition of local TV stations by the Sinclair Broadcast Group, affects U.S. municipal police departments. In particular, we implement a triple differences-in-differences design that exploits the staggered timing of acquisitions 2010-2017, together with cross-sectional variation in whether municipalities are covered by local news at baseline, a proxy for exposure to the shock. First, using a newly collected dataset of 300,000 transcripts of local newscasts, we document that once acquired by Sinclair, TV stations decrease news coverage of local crime. Second, we find that after Sinclair enters a media market, municipalities that were likely to be in the news at baseline experience 8% lower violent crime clearance rates with respect to municipalities that were very rarely in the news in the first place. The main mechanism we propose is that the change in content induces police officers to decrease the effort allocated to clearing violent crimes, due to a decline in the salience of crime as an issue in the public opinion.

"Subsidies and the Dynamics of Selection: Experimental Evidence from Indonesia's National Health Insurance." Joint with Abhijit Banerjee, Amy Finkelstein, Rema Hanna, Ben Olken and Sudarno Sumarto. April 2020.

Revise & Resubmit at the American Economic Review.

How can developing countries increase health insurance? We experimentally assessed three approaches that simple theory suggests could increase coverage and potentially reduce adverse selection: temporary price subsidies, registration assistance, and information. Temporary subsidies attracted lower-cost enrollees, in part by reducing strategic coverage timing. While subsidies were active, coverage increased more than eightfold, at no higher unit cost to the government; after subsidies ended, coverage remained twice as high, again at no higher cost. However, subsidies are not sufficient to achieve universal coverage: the most intensive intervention - a full one-year subsidy combined with registration assistance - resulted in only 30 percent enrollment.

"Gender Attitudes in the Judiciary: Evidence from U.S. Circuit Courts." Joint with Elliott Ash and Daniel L. Chen. June 2020.

Do gender attitudes influence interactions with female judges in U.S. Circuit Courts? In this paper, we propose a novel judge-specific measure of gender attitudes based on use of gender-stereotyped language in the judge's authored opinions. Exploiting quasi-random assignment of judges to cases and conditioning on judges' characteristics, we validate the measure showing that slanted judges vote more conservatively in gender-related cases. Slant influences interactions with female colleagues: slanted judges are more likely to reverse lower-court decisions if the lower-court judge is a woman than a man, are less likely to assign opinions to female judges, and cite fewer female-authored opinions.

"Closing Time: The Local Amenity Effects of Prohibition." Joint with Greg Howard. August 2020.

Submitted.

How do amenities affect local land values, production, and sorting? We study the question exploiting a large historical policy change: U.S. Alcohol Prohibition in the early 20th century. Comparing same-state early and late adopters of county dry laws in a difference-in-differences design, we find that early Prohibition adoption increased population and farm real estate values. Moreover, we find strong effects on farm productivity consistent with increased investment due to a land price channel. In equilibrium, the amenity change disproportionately attracted immigrants and African-Americans.

"Civil Service Reforms: Evidence from U.S. Police Departments." July 2019.

Does reducing politicians's control over public employees's hiring and firing improve bureaucratic performance? I answer this question exploiting population-based mandates for U.S. municipal police department merit systems in a regression discontinuity design. Merit system mandates improve performance: crime rates are lower in departments operating under a merit system than in departments under a spoils system. Changes in resources or police officers's characteristics do not drive the effect, but I provide suggestive evidence that the limitations to politicians's ability to influence police officers are instead important.

Teaching Experience

2018 - 2020 : Research in Applied Economics (Undergraduate Theses Supervision), Warwick
2017 : Teaching Assistant for edX Data Analysis for Social Sciences, MIT
2017 : Teaching Assistant for Graduate Political Economy, MIT
2016 : Kauffman Teaching Certificate Program, MIT
2015 : Teaching Assistant for Principles of Microeconomics, MIT
2015 : Teaching Assistant for the JPAL Summer Executive Education Program, MIT

Research Experience

2013 - 2014 : Research Assistant to Ben Olken, MIT
2012 : Field Research Assistant to Martina Bjorkman, Lucia Corno, Damien de Walque and Jakob Svensson, World Bank, Lesotho
2012 : Research Assistant to Eliana La Ferrara, Bocconi University
2012 : Research Assistant to Angelo Porta, Bocconi University

Grants

2019 - 2021 : Russel Sage Foundation Presidential Grant in Behavioral Economics, with Elliott Ash and Daniel L. Chen (\$35,000)

2019 - 2022 : British Academy Postdoctoral Research Fellowship (£345,000)
 2018 : British Academy Small Research Grant, with Nicola Mastroiocco (£10,000)
 2017 : CAGE Research Fund Small Grant, with Greg Howard (£5,000)
 2016 : Sokoloff Dissertation Fellowship, Economic History Association (\$15,000)
 2014 - 2015 : Jameel Fellowship in Poverty Alleviation and Development Economics
 2015 : Exploratory Travel and Data Grant, Economic History Association
 2015 - 2016 : George and Obie Shultz Fund
 2013 - 2014 : James A. Berkovec Memorial Fund
 2012 - 2013 : MIT Department of Economics Fellowship
 2009 - 2010 : Bocconi Merit Awards

Presentations

2020 : UEA Textual Analysis Workshop, Economics of Crime Online Seminar, Economics of Discrimination & Disparities Online Seminar, Stockholm Workshop on Diversity and Inclusion, Nottingham Workshop on the Economics of Gender Norms, SoDa Labs Webinar Series, European Economic Association Congress, Zurich Econ & Data Science Reading Group, Deep Learning Trends and Classics Reading Group
 2019 : EMUEA Meetings, PSE Conflict Workshop, University of Glasgow
 2018 : OWL Economic History Workshop, Warwick Economic History Workshop, Quebec Political Economy Conference, Royal Economic Society, Barcelona GSE Summer Forum, APSA Conference, EALE Annual Conference
 2017 : Arizona State University School of Politics and Global Studies, Einaudi Institute for Economics and Finance, IIES Stockholm University, Bank of Italy, University of British Columbia, IESE Business School
 2016 : Economic History Association (poster session)

Academic Activities

2020 - : Co-organizer of the POLECONUK Webinar Series
 2017 - : Organizer of the PEPE Research Days at the University of Warwick
 Referee for *American Economic Review*, *American Economic Review: Insights*, *Review of Economics and Statistics*, *Review of Economic Studies*, *Social Choice and Welfare*

References

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