

TRAM NGUYEN

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Department of Economics Stanford University
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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Economics (expected), Stanford University, June 2018.

M.A. in Economics, Stanford University, 2014.

B.Sc. in Economics and Mathematics; minor in Chinese, Bates College, 2010 (*Summa Cum Laude*).

RESEARCH FIELDS

Primary fields: Development and Applied Microeconomics.

Secondary field: Labor Economics.

REFERENCES

Prof. Pascaline Dupas (*Primary*)
Economics Department, Stanford University
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Prof. Luigi Pistaferri
Economics Department, Stanford University
+1 (650) 724-4904
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Prof. Marcel Fafchamps
Economics Department (by courtesy), Stanford
University
+1 (650) 497-4602
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RELEVANT POSITIONS

2013-2014 Research Assistant to Professor Pascaline Dupas, Economics Department, Stanford

2010-2012 Research Assistant, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Boston, MA

Summer 2009 Market Research Intern, AFS-USA, New York

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2016 – Present Teaching Assistant Liaison and Mentor, Stanford University, Economics Department
- Summer 2017 Teaching Assistant, Professor John B. Taylor, Massive Online Open Course Platform and Summer Program, Stanford University
- Spring 2016 Teaching Assistant, Professor Ward Hanson, Stanford University
Economic Policy Seminar on the Economic Impact of Technology and Innovation
- Summer 2016 Teaching Assistant, Professor Chris Makler, Stanford University
Intermediate Microeconomics
- Summer 2015 Teaching Assistant, Professor John B. Taylor, Massive Online Open Course Platform and Summer Program, Stanford University
- 2015 - 2016 Teaching Assistant, Professor Melanie Morten, Professor Mark Duggan, Professor John B. Taylor and Professor Marcelo Clerici-Arias, Stanford University
Introductory Economics

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

- 2017 Centennial Teaching Assistant Award, Stanford University
- 2017 Mentor in Teaching Fellow, Stanford University Center for Teaching and Learning
- 2016 Introductory Economics Center Distinguished Teaching Award, Stanford University
- 2015-2016 Outstanding Teaching Assistant, Stanford Economics Department
- Spring 2015 Stanford Center for International Development Research Grant
- 2012-2013 First-year Graduate Fellowship, Stanford University
- 2010 Phi Beta Kappa, Award for Most Outstanding Economics Thesis, Bates College
- 2006-2010 International Student Full-Ride Scholarship, Dean's List all quarters, Bates College

WORKING PAPERS

“Spillover effects of a sector-specific minimum wage” (*Job Market Paper*)

A sector-specific minimum wage, while designed to protect workers in one booming industry, might result in unintended consequences for other uncovered sectors. The garment sector in Cambodia is the only sector with a strongly enforced and monitored minimum wage. I study how changes in the garment minimum wage affect other low-skill, uncovered sectors. A labor search model predicts that, given the outside option channel for workers, the impact on the wage in the uncovered sector will be inverse-U shaped. Empirical results show that an increase in minimum wage compresses the female wage distributions in the garment sector. There is evidence for positive spillovers to non-garment, low-skill sector using a difference-in-difference framework. A substantial increase in minimum wage causes an increase in the average female wage in the low-skill sector. The spillovers are stronger for individuals who live closer to the garment factories or those in provinces where the garment sector is more present. As the minimum wage in the garment sector keeps increasing, the spillover effect diminishes and becomes negative but statistically insignificant.

“The impact of garment industry on women’s welfare in Cambodia”

This paper examines the impact of the expansion of the garment industry in Cambodia in the 1990s on the education and marriage outcomes for young women. Using variation in the timing and locations of the entry of garment factories, I show that women who were under the age of fifteen when the factories first opened in their provinces obtain more years of schooling and tend to delay marriage and childbirth. I rule out the income effect channel by comparing girls whose mothers work in the garment sector with those whose mothers do not work. The results still hold for girls with non-working mothers, suggesting that the increase in education found are due to the returns to education mechanism. Garment sector expansion creates new job opportunities for young female workforce and encourages them to obtain more education when returns to education increase.

“Bridging the gap – Effects of reduced transportation costs on farm-gate prices”

One of the stark differences between developing and developed countries is the lack of physical infrastructure. This paper aims to answer whether infrastructure improvements and lower cost of transportation result in greater market integration and how they impact prices at farm gates in the context of Vietnam Mekong Delta. In this region, the availability and conditions of transportations to and from the farms play an important role in determining producers' prices. Using bridge construction projects in the 2000s as exogenous treatments, I examine whether improved infrastructure reduces interregional price gaps and increases producers' prices. The impact could be either an increase in farm-gate prices of rice in beneficiary provinces due to reduced transportation cost, or a reduction of the price gap between provinces located across the bridge. I found no effect of reduced transportation cost on farm-gate prices, although there is evidence of farm diversification from less time-sensitive to more time-sensitive crops.

“Correcting for misinformation using machine learning” (with Adem Dugalic)

We propose several algorithms to reduce the errors of classification created by using imperfect training sets. A classic example is misallocation of scarce funds to poor households due to unobserved income in combination with misreporting or corruption at the administrative level. Suppose there are several training examples in which the targets are misclassified at a certain rate. Since the errors are imperfectly correlated across training examples, wrongly classified observations in one sample will share common characteristics with observations that are differently classified in other samples. We use this insight to develop several machine learning algorithms to reduce the classification error. We apply the algorithms to the context of aid programs targeting poor households with limited knowledge of their true income and poverty ranking. In our mainline specification of the problem, our main algorithm makes a 37% improvement in the allocation of the funds.

SKILLS Matlab, Stata, R, Latex, Java, Visual Basic, Python (basic)

LANGUAGES English (fluent), Vietnamese (native), Chinese (conversational)

OTHERS Research Grant up to \$7000 to travel to Cambodia and work with representatives from the Garment Manufacturing Association.