

Northwestern

Economics

VISHAL KAMAT

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PERSONAL INFORMATION

Citizenship: India

RESEARCH AND TEACHING FIELDS

Research: Econometrics (primary), Applied Microeconomics (secondary)
Teaching: Econometrics, Applied Microeconomics

DOCTORAL STUDIES

Ph.D., Economics, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois
Dissertation: Essays in Microeconometrics
Committee Chairperson: Ivan A. Canay
Date of Completion: June 2018 (expected)

PREDOCTORAL STUDIES

M.A.: Economics, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, 2014
M.Sc.: Econometrics and Mathematical Economics *with Distinction*, London School of Economics & Political Science, London, United Kingdom, 2013
B.Sc.: Mathematics and Economics *with First Class Honors*, London School of Economics & Political Science, London, United Kingdom, 2012

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Northwestern Dissertation Fellowship, 2017
Robert Eisner Memorial Fellowship, 2016
Northwestern Graduate Fellowship, 2013

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, Northwestern University, 2014-2015
ECON 381-2: Econometrics
ECON 307: Economics of Medical Care
ECON 201: Introduction to Macroeconomics
Teaching Assistant, London School of Economics & Political Science, 2012-2013
ECON 221: Principles of Econometrics

RESEARCH AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant to Professor Ivan A. Canay, Fall 2015 - Spring 2016
Research Assistant to Professor Lee Lockwood, Summer 2015
Summer Intern, Compass Lexecon, London, UK, Summer 2013
Summer Intern, Institute of Economic Affairs, London, UK, Summer 2011

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Refereeing: Journal of Econometrics

JOB MARKET PAPER

“Identification with Latent Choice Sets: The Case of the Head Start Impact Study”, November 2017.

Abstract: This paper studies identification of program effects in settings with latent choice sets. Here, by latent choice sets, I mean the unobserved heterogeneity that arises when the choice set from which the agent selects treatment is heterogeneous and unobserved by the researcher. The analysis is developed in the context of the Head Start Impact Study, a social experiment designed to evaluate preschools as part of Head Start, the largest early childhood education program in the United States. In this setting, resource constraints limit preschool slots to only a few eligible children through an assignment mechanism that is not observed in the data, which in turn introduces unobserved heterogeneity in the child’s choice set of care settings. I propose a nonparametric model that explicitly accounts for latent choice sets in the care setting enrollment decision. In this model, I study various parameters that evaluate Head Start in terms of policies that mandate enrollment and also those that allow voluntary enrollment into Head Start. I show that the identified set for these parameters given the information provided by the study and by various institutional details of the setting can be constructed using a linear programming method. Applying the developed analysis, I find that a significant proportion of parents voluntarily enroll their children into Head Start if provided access and that Head Start is effective in terms of improving short-term test scores across multiple policy dimensions.

PUBLICATIONS

“Approximate Permutation Tests and Induced Order Statistics in the Regression Discontinuity Design”, with Ivan A. Canay, forthcoming in *The Review of Economic Studies*.

Abstract: In the regression discontinuity design, it is common practice to assess the credibility of the design by testing whether the means of baseline covariates do not change at the cutoff (or threshold) of the running variable. This practice is partly motivated by the stronger implication derived by [Lee \(2008\)](#), who showed that under certain conditions the distribution of baseline covariates in the RDD must be continuous at the cutoff. We propose a permutation test based on the so-called induced ordered statistics for the null hypothesis of continuity of the distribution of baseline covariates at the cutoff; and introduce a novel asymptotic framework to analyze its properties. The asymptotic framework is intended to approximate a small sample phenomenon: even though the total number n of observations may be large, the number of effective observations local to the cutoff is often small. Thus, while traditional asymptotics in RDD require a growing number of observations local to the cutoff as $n \rightarrow \infty$, our framework keeps the number q of observations local to the cutoff fixed as $n \rightarrow \infty$. The new test is easy to implement, asymptotically valid under weak conditions, exhibits finite sample validity under stronger conditions than those needed for its asymptotic validity, and has favorable power properties relative to tests based on means. In a simulation study, we find that the new test controls size remarkably well across designs. We then use our test to evaluate the plausibility of the design in [Lee \(2008\)](#), a well-known application of the RDD to study incumbency advantage.

“On Nonparametric Inference in the Regression Discontinuity Design”, forthcoming in *Econometric Theory*.

Abstract: This paper studies the validity of nonparametric tests used in the regression discontinuity design. The null hypothesis of interest is that the average treatment effect at the threshold in the so-called sharp design equals a pre-specified value. We first show that, under assumptions used in the majority of the literature, for any test the power against any alternative is bounded above by its size. This result implies that, under these assumptions, any test with nontrivial power will exhibit size distortions. We next provide a sufficient strengthening of the standard assumptions under which we show that a version of a test suggested in [Calonico et al. \(2014\)](#) can control limiting size.

WORK IN PROGRESS

“Clustered Standard Errors in Experiments with Covariate Adaptive Randomization”, with Federico Bugni, Ivan A. Canay, Azeem M. Shaikh, and Max Tabord-Meehan, *In Progress*.

LANGUAGES

English (fluent), Marathi (native), French (intermediate)

REFERENCES

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