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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Boston University, Boston MA, May 2010 (expected)
Dissertation Title: *Three Essays on Student Peer Effects*
Dissertation Committee: Kevin Lang, Daniele Paserman and Claudia Olivetti

M.A., Economics, Boston University, Boston MA, 2006
B.A., Economics, Stanford University, Stanford CA, 1997

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Labor Economics, Industrial Organization, Empirical Microeconomics

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor, Introductory Macroeconomics, Boston University, Summer 2006
Teaching Fellow, Modeling Business Decisions, School of Management, Boston University,
Fall 2009
Teaching Fellow, Introductory Macroeconomics, Boston University, Spring 2008
Teaching Fellow, Introductory Microeconomics, Boston University, Spring 2006, Fall 2005

WORK EXPERIENCE

Research Assistantship
Prof. Claudia Olivetti, Boston University, Summer 2006 – Spring 2010

Professional
Consultant, Econ One Research, Inc., Los Angeles CA, 2000 – 2004
Manager of Market Analysis, LodgeNet Interactive Corp., Sioux Falls SD, 1997 – 2000

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Research Fellowship, Boston University, 2006 – 2010
Dean's Fellowship, Boston University, 2004 – 2006

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

Boston University Empirical Microeconomics Workshop, Boston MA, 2009
Add Health Users Conference, Bethesda MD, 2008

COMPUTER SKILLS: Stata, SAS, SPSS, Gauss, MATLAB

CITIZENSHIP: United States

WORKING PAPERS

“Mexican-Americans in US Schools” November 2009.

“Gender Peer Effects on Adolescent Behavior” February 2010.

WORK IN PROGRESS

“Immigrant Student Peer Effects”

“Formal and Informal Authority in Organizations”

“Now you see me, now you don’t: distance education and discrimination in the classroom”

REFERENCES

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MIKHAIL PYATIGORSKY

Mexican-Americans in US Schools (Job Market Paper)

This paper analyzes the impact of 1st and 2nd generation immigrants from Mexico, the largest immigrant group in the US, on both native schoolchildren and the Mexican-Americans themselves. My contributions to the literature are twofold. First, I use self-reported friendship data to show that Mexican-Americans have strongly assortative networks that span grade levels. A number of studies have used intra-school grade-level variations in peer characteristics to identify peer effects, relying on the assumption that classmates are the relevant peer group. My findings demonstrate that, in the case of Mexican-American adolescents, this assumption is invalid. Second, contrary to what we might expect given previous results on immigration, I find little evidence of between- or within-group negative effects of Mexican-American students. My results suggest that having Mexican-American classmates is not significantly correlated with natives' college attendance, or with variables such as engagement in risky behavior, delinquency, or sexual activity. There is also no statistically significant effect of having Mexican-American friends on Mexican-Americans' own long-term academic outcomes.

Gender Peer Effects on Adolescent Behavior

This paper analyzes gender peer effects among junior and high school students. The sample is drawn from a large, nationally representative, longitudinal study of adolescents, with detailed individual and school information. Variation in the proportion of girls across grade levels within a school provides the identification, while school selection is controlled with fixed effects. The availability of short- and long-term academic indicators, as well as extensive data on attitudes towards school and school involvement, delinquency, friendships, and sexual activity provides a unique look at the ways in which adolescent girls and boys affect each other. My results suggest that high school girls who have more female classmates are significantly and substantially more likely to graduate. However, there is no significant correlation between sex ratios and high school completion among boys; or grades, enrollment in advanced courses, or college attendance of boys or girls. On the other hand, I do find significant behavioral effects, whose direction is consistent with literature on (a) marriage markets and (b) pubertal development. Namely, the proportion of girls in a school-grade is positively correlated with being sexually active among girls and with being sexually aware among younger boys. Having more female classmates is also correlated with more positive attitudes towards school but, at the same time, greater likelihood of delinquent, and potentially dangerous, behaviors among boys.

Immigrant Student Peer Effects

What is the overall impact of immigrants in American schools? Do they affect the quality of instruction, the attitude of native students towards school, the propensity to "misbehave"? Does this matter for long-term outcomes, such as academic performance and health indicators after high school? Building upon previous work with the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, I analyze the degree to which immigrant peer effects vary according to the observable characteristics of immigrant students, such as country of origin and level of acculturation. This research is underway. The goal is to understand the specific mechanisms through which immigration impacts the native population.