

Divya Singh

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Placement Assistant: Amy Devine, (212) 854-6881, aed2152@columbia.edu

EDUCATION

Last updated: September 15, 2019

Columbia University in the City of New York

Ph.D. in Economics, Expected May 2020.

Indian Statistical Institute, Delhi

Master of Science in Quantitative Economics, 2014.

Miranda House, University of Delhi

B.A. Honors in Economics, 2012.

FIELDS OF SPECIALIZATION

Primary field: Public Economics

Secondary fields: Development Economics, Urban Economics

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Awards

Harriss Prize, Best Second Year Paper, Columbia University, 2016.

Teaching Fellow, Columbia University, 2015-19.

Dean's Fellow, Columbia University, 2014-19.

Honorary Book Grant × 4, Indian Statistical Institute, Delhi, 2012-2014.

Sumana Dutta Gold Medal for Best student in economics, Miranda House, Delhi University, 2012.

Fellowships and grants

Dissertation fellowship, Columbia University, 2019-20.

Center for Development Economics and Policy, Columbia University, \$3500, 2018.

GSAS Matching Travel Grant, 2018.

Dr. Edwin P. and Dr. Beatrice Reubens Fellowship, \$2000, 2017.

Center for Development Economics and Policy, Columbia University, \$900, 2016.

Development Colloquium Funds, \$800, 2016.

RESEARCH

Job Market Paper

WP1 "Does an Expected Loss of Property Tax Benefits for New Construction Spur Gentrification? Evidence from New York City"

Some cities have proposed tax benefits on new investment as a measure to relieve tenants from rising rents. In this paper, I use a property tax reform in New York City to estimate whether such incentives work locally. The tax reform removed property tax benefits for new residential investment. However, the delay between announcement and implementation of the policy change led to the concentration of investment within a short period. Using bunching of units at the expiration deadline, I find that a 1% increase in the future property tax increased current residential investment by 0.4%. Yet, this new investment did not lower the rents paid by the tenants in the affected neighborhoods. Using the baseline land availability within a small radius around an incumbent unit's as an instrument, I find that an additional new tax-exempt unit during the bunching period *increased* the incumbent unit rent by 2.3%. I find evidence consistent with the hypothesis that new residential investment made neighborhoods more desirable by attracting affluent households, facilitating the entry of businesses and consumption amenities. Overall, the results indicate that accelerated *new* investment spurred neighborhood change.

Working Papers

WP2. “Merging to Dodge Taxes? Unexpected Consequences of VAT Adoption in India”

This paper investigates whether tax evasion creates incentives among firms to reorganize their production. Value Added Tax (VAT) is the world's most popular consumption tax and is considered revenue efficient since cross-reporting of firm-to-firm transactions leads to self-enforcement. However, the ability to evade tax on firm to consumer transactions creates incentives for the last two firms in the production chain to integrate vertically. I test this hypothesis by using a quasi-experiment in India where sales tax was replaced with VAT in a staggered manner between 2003 and 2008 and provided exogenous shock to tax evasion opportunities along the production chain. Difference-in-difference analysis reveals that post reform, treated firms sourced more 'upstream' products and had greater vertical mergers, indicating increased vertical integration under VAT. In addition, the effect is largest for firms which are closest to final demand indicating that tax-evasion is one of the channels. Overall, the results suggest that VAT is no longer production efficient in settings of low compliance.

WP3. “Safer Elections, Women Turnout and Political Outcomes: Evidence from India.”

This paper estimates the effects of increasing security at the polling booths on the election day. Using detailed voting and political outcomes dataset at the polling booth-level, and a regression discontinuity design, we find that greater security at the polling booths increases women share in total turnout by 1.4 percentage points. There is suggestive evidence that booths with a higher probability of security treatment are associated with a lower vote share of the incumbent party candidate, corrupt candidates, and a higher vote share of educated candidates. The evidence suggests that safer elections affect outcomes through an increase in women turnout.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Conference presentations (* indicates scheduled)

| | <i>Paper</i> | <i>Year</i> |
|---|--------------|-------------|
| Urban Economics Association Meetings*, Philadelphia | WP1 | 2019 |
| National Tax Association Meetings*, Tampa, Florida | WP1,2 | 2019 |
| Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management*, Denver | WP1 | 2019 |
| Young Economists Symposium, Columbia, New York | WP1 | 2019 |
| Independent Budget Office, New York | WP1 | 2019 |
| NY Fiscal Policy Breakfast, Federal Reserve, New York | WP1 | 2019 |
| The Mayor's Office of Management and Budget, New York | WP1 | 2019 |
| ZEW Summer Workshop, Mannheim, Germany | WP1 | 2019 |
| Conference on Value Added of Value Added Taxes, World Bank, DC | WP2 | 2019 |
| Conference on Public Finance in Developing countries, Zurich | WP2 | 2018 |
| Poster at National Tax Association meeting, New Orleans | WP2 | 2018 |
| Young Economists Symposium, NYU | WP2 | 2018 |
| Development and Political Economy Conference, UC Berkeley | WP2 | 2018 |
| PhD Conference, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK | WP2 | 2018 |
| PhD Conference, George Washington University, Washington D.C. | WP3 | 2018 |
| Poster at Women in Science at Columbia | WP3 | 2018 |
| Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development, ISI Delhi | WP3 | 2017 |
| APPAM Regional Student Conference, Washington, D.C. | WP3 | 2017 |

Attendance

NBER Graduate student workshop and Conference in Business Taxation, 2018.

(Co)-organization

Summer reading group in Public finance, Columbia University, 2018.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistantships

Professor Francois Gerard, Columbia University, Summer & Fall, 2016.

Professor Suresh Naidu, Columbia University, Summer 2015.

Professor Tridip Ray, Indian Statistical Institute, Summer 2013.

Internships

Consultant, World Bank, D.C., Summer 2016.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Full instructor

- International trade, 2017.

Teaching assistant:

- Public Economics, Fall 2017 and 2018.
- Economic development, Spring 2018, Spring 2019.
- American Economy, Fall 2016.
- Principles of Economics, Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Summer 2018.

PERSONAL

Languages: English (fluent), Hindi (native)

Citizenship: India

REFERENCES

Wojciech Kopczuk (Sponsor)

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