



Media Advisory

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Congratulations David Alfaro Serrano, Winner of National Science Foundation (NSF) Doctoral Dissertation Research Award!

David Alfaro Serrano was awarded the 2018 National Science Foundation (NSF) Doctoral Dissertation Research Award in the social, behavioral and economic (SBE) sciences. The grant was awarded for a proposal titled, “The Direct and Indirect Effect of Innovation Subsidies.” Serrano is a fifth-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Economics. “The research will contribute to the literature by providing data on the effectiveness of government subsidies to promote technological upgrading and boost firm performance in developing countries,” explains Serrano. “The existing research about this type of intervention are focused on developed countries and high-tech industries, and infer technological improvement from patents and R&D expenditure. As a consequence, lessons are hard to extrapolate to the developing country context,” he adds.

Serrano’s research interest is in development economics, econometrics, and industrial organization. He says the project opens the black box of the firm and allows researchers to observe the changes that are triggered within a company when it receives support for innovative activities, shedding light on the mechanisms through which government support for innovation affects firm performance. “The findings of this research will further advance our understanding of the relationship between innovation subsidy programs and firm behavior, and also inform policy design in developing countries and institutions which have played an important role in the diffusion of interventions to promote productive development,” he says. “The project further explores spillovers operating through labor mobility and procurement relationships. These are two channels capable of transmitting information between companies and, therefore, it is worth assessing the extent to which they contribute to the diffusion of innovative ideas and of the benefits of innovation subsidies.”

The NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Award for SBE supports basic research on people and society. The SBE sciences focus on human behavior and social organizations and how social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental forces affect the lives of people from birth to old age and how people in turn shape those forces. “This grant is important for my research as it will help me collect important data. Additionally, the fact that the reviewers considered this as an interesting idea is, of course, encouraging,” notes Serrano.

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