

Research Interests

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My research interests are primarily in applied microeconomics. I am not limited to any one specific area as the breadth of my dissertation indicates. The focus of my dissertation is applying microeconomics to problems that are facing policymakers. Rather than prescribing certain policies, I attempt to stay true to positive economics and simply clarify the facts for policymakers.

My first essay is on TRIPS (trade related intellectual property rights), biodiversity and North-South trade and is currently under review. In this paper I explore how true North-South trade and different IPR (intellectual property rights) regimes affect the level of biodiversity that is maintained by a Southern government. I show that protecting farmers' rights only is the regime that will be chosen by the Southern government and the regime that will lead to the maximum level of biodiversity. This is important for policymakers as provisions for protecting farmers' rights do not currently exist. This finding confirms previous results that did not include true North-South trade. I also find in this essay that positive levels of biodiversity will be maintained by the Southern government if only international patent protection is implemented. This is a departure from existing literature that does not incorporate true North-South trade into the model. This is relevant for policymakers in that provisions for international patent protection do exist currently.

The second essay of my dissertation focuses on factors that affect attendance at MLS soccer matches, in particular David Beckham. There are a number of decisions facing MLS regarding designated players, such as Beckham, and the scheduling of the MLS season. One problem regarding David Beckham is his loan to AC Milan (an Italian soccer club). By estimating his effect on attendance, a better idea of the compensation that is needed from AC Milan can be gained. MLS is also facing the decision of whether or not to switch the months that its season is played (switch to the international calendar). One concern of changing where the season falls on the calendar is that attendance will be hurt. I attempt to quantify the impacts different months and days of the week have on attendance at matches. This information can aid MLS as it decides whether switching to the international calendar is a prudent move for the league.

The final essay I have included in my dissertation is on moral hazard, market power and the demand for health insurance. The issue of health insurance is one of the main questions facing the U.S. government and its citizens. I try to provide insight for policymakers in this essay by addressing whether or not increasing the amount of insurance consumers purchase would be utility increasing or not. There is a substantial amount of literature on whether or not the over-purchase of insurance has resulted in a large amount of moral hazard that causes a wasting of society's resources. I explore how market power on the part of health care providers and the potential power of a health care purchaser (single-payer system) affects the well being on individuals in society.