

## Matthew D. Lang

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### Education

Ph.D. (Economics) University of California-Santa Barbara, Expected June 2010  
M.A. (Economics) University of California-Santa Barbara, 2009  
M.Sc. with Merit (Economics) London School of Economics, 2005  
B.S. with Honors, *Magna cum Laude* (Economics) University of Redlands, 2004

### Research Interests

Health Economics, Labor Economics, Social Networks, Altruism

### Awards and Honors

Keith Griffin Memorial Award for Graduate Student Performance, 2008-2009  
Departmental Travel Grant Recipient, 2008-2009  
Departmental Research Competition Winner, 2007-2008  
Outstanding Teaching Assistant, 2007-2008  
Southern California Phi Beta Kappa Graduate Scholarship Award, 2004

### Conferences and Presentations

Society of Labor Economics Annual Meeting (Poster Session), 2009  
Annual Conference of the Canadian Health Economics Study Group (CHESG), 2009  
All-UC Labor Conference, 2009

### Teaching Experience

*Course Instructor*, Labor Economics, University of California-Santa Barbara, Summer 2009  
*Teaching Assistant*, Statistics, Principles of Micro- and Macroeconomics, Intermediate Microeconomics, International Trade, Personnel Economics, Financial Economics, Microeconomic Theory (Ph.D.), University of California-Santa Barbara, 2005-Present  
*Undergraduate Tutor*, Calculus, Micro- and Macroeconomics, University of Redlands, 2000-04

### Related Experience

*Research Assistant* for Professor Philip Babcock, University of California-Santa Barbara, 2008  
*GIS Consultant*, Flint Trading, Thomasville, NC, 2007-2008  
*Research Assistant* for Department of Economics, University of Redlands, 2001-2004

## Research Papers

*Mental Health Insurance Laws, State Suicide Rates and Labor Market Outcomes, 2009* [**Job Market Paper**]

**Abstract:** In the 1990s and early 2000s a number of states passed laws requiring employers to include mental health benefits in their health insurance coverage. The variation in the strength and enactment date of the laws provides an opportunity to measure the impact of these laws on mental health outcomes, as evidenced by state suicide rates. In contrast with previous research, results show that when states enact laws requiring insurance coverage to include mental health benefits at parity with physical health benefits, the suicide rate decreases by four percent. The laws are also used to test the impact of mental health access on hourly wages and the average weekly hours of work using the March supplement of the CPS. Differences-in-differences (DD) and differences-in-differences-in-differences (DDD) results show that labor market outcomes are not impacted by the mental health mandates. This is likely because the percentage of mentally ill individuals affected by the laws in the data is limited. While the results measuring the effect on labor market outcomes are imprecise, they do not refute the initial finding that mental health mandates are effective in improving mental health outcomes.

*Incorporating Altruism into the Network Formation Process, 2009* [**Working paper**]

**Abstract:** The implications of incorporating altruism into networks are examined. When players act altruistically, the number of possible efficient graphs increases. In a perfectly altruistic network, the efficient networks will always be stable, although increasing altruism does not monotonically decrease the tension between stable and efficient networks. These results are shown in detail using a four-player network, however the main results hold for a network of any size.

## Work in Progress

*Firearm Background Checks and Suicide: A New Approach to Measuring Gun-Related Deaths*

**Abstract:** A number of studies have explored the connection between guns, homicide and suicide but the existing research is unable to separate the selection effect of gun owners from the causal effect of gun ownership on suicide. This paper reduces much of the selection bias by examining the effect of gun ownership on the suicide of the youth, as they are unable to legally purchase weapons. Using a new, and arguably stronger, proxy for gun ownership, annual firearm background checks, it is found that an increase in gun ownership causes youth suicide from firearms to increase, while non-firearm suicides decrease making the overall effect of gun ownership on youth suicide insignificant. Similar results are found using the suicide rate for all individuals and it appears that in order to decrease suicide rates, policies reducing access to firearms must be coupled with initiatives to improve overall mental health.

## References

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