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MEHDI MAJBOURI

Personal Information: US Permanent Resident

Fields

Development Economics, Labor Economics, Applied Econometrics

Education

- Ph.D. in Economics**, expected May 2010
University of Southern California Los Angeles, CA
Thesis Title: “Against the Wind: Essays on Labor Force Participation of Women in Iran”
- Master of Business Administration**, August 2004
Sharif University of Technology Tehran, Iran
- B.S. in Mechanical Engineering**, September 2002
Sharif University of Technology Tehran, Iran

Honors and Awards

- Willis Annenberg Fellowship for Research on Women** June 2009- May 2010
USC, Los Angeles, CA
- Center for Excellence in Teaching – Teaching Assistant Fellow** Fall 2007-Winter 2009
USC Center for Excellence in Teaching, Los Angeles, CA
- US-China Institute Summer Fieldwork Grant** Summer 2007
USC US-China Institute, Los Angeles, CA
- Graduate Merit Fellowship** Fall 2004 - present
Graduate School, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA
- Outstanding Student Award** 2002 - 2004
Graduate School of Business and Economics, Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Iran.

Published Papers

- “The Reaction of Real-Estate-Related Industries to the Monetary Policy Actions”, with Levon Goukasian, forthcoming in *Journal of Real Estate Economics*, (final version: March 2009).
- “Private Sector Industrialization in China: Evidence from Wenzhou”, with John Strauss, Edward Y. Qian, Minggao Shen, Dong Liu, Qi Sun, and Qianfan Ying, forthcoming in the selection of papers *State, Community, and Development*, Palgrave-McMillan Publishing, (final version: May 2009).

Research Papers

Job Market Paper

“Against the Wind: Labor Force Participation of Women and Economic Instability in Iran”.

Abstract: Despite many obstacles, women in Iran have gained extraordinary achievements in the last two and a half decades. Fertility rates have fallen universally in one of the largest and fastest transitions in modern human history from 7 in 1984 to almost 2 in 2002, while years of education consistently increased generation after generation, to the extent that young women's education (below thirty years of age) surpass young men's on average. In addition, household production technologies were improving all the time. But still labor force participation rates remain at their low levels two decades ago. This account for what is called puzzle of labor force participation in the literature. In this paper, I would argue that despite its rigidities, labor force participation of women respond to economic pressures induced by macro-economic instabilities. Looking at the economic instability of 1994-95, I show that large unexpected rise in prices and hence fall in real wages, would provide a ground for women to join the labor market, increasing female labor force participation in rural areas.

Other Research

“Understanding Mobility and Poverty Dynamics in Iran”, with Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, July 2009
(Under review in the Quarterly Review of Finance and Economics).

Abstract: This paper uses a four-year panel data to throw light on the extent of true mobility and dynamics of poverty in Iran. We pay particular attention to problems of attrition and measurement error. We use different methods of correcting for spurious mobility and find a range for transition probabilities that is fairly wide: between 50 and about 25% chance that someone in the lowest (highest) quintile moves up (down) the welfare ladder while someone in the three middle quintiles moves up and down with fairly the same chance. We also find that the chance of getting out of poverty in one year is only about 15%. Focusing on mobility at the lower part of the distribution, we distinguish between chronic and transient poor and compare them in terms of household characteristics and region of residence. Surprisingly, we find that long term poverty is a more serious problem in urban than rural areas. Transient poverty is geographically more uniformly distributed. Both chronic and transient poverty have negative correlation with speaking Persian (Farsi), decline with age and education of the head of household, but increase if the head of the household is female. This implies a well-defined anti-policy program that is more focused on minorities and female headed households, and have a strong human capital aspect.

“Parental Bereavement: Is Tragedy Mitigated?”

Abstract: Losing a child may be one of the worst tragedies that could happen to parents and could have large effects on post-tragedy behavior and welfare of them. In this paper, I will try to estimate the effect of losing a child on long-term earnings of parents. Controlling for individual fixed effects in addition to observables, I find that losing a child can have a negative effect of 0.7% per year on earnings that persists even after more than 5 years. The results are robust to specification. I also try to find heterogeneity of the effect across mothers or fathers, lost sons or daughters, lost adults or youngsters, and the order of the deceased child.

“On the Dynamics of Women Rights Movement in Iran, 1996-2006”

Abstract: The tumultuous history of women’s rights movement in Iran opened a new passage in 1997 that led to spectacular achievements in women’s liberties and social status. Despite a mixture of social/political conservatism in Iran which opposes any improvement in women’s rights institutions, cascades of change, following each other, incurred huge progress in social lives of millions of Iranian women. Discussing these remarkable changes, this paper aims to study the primary reasons of institutional changes in Iran. The argument is heavily based on Kuran’s theory of preference falsification (1995). Using other modern institutional theories, the paper explains the political, social, economical and even technological factors that provided a self-reinforcing equilibrium under which the weak institutions of women’s rights gained strength and are continuing to do so. Finally, the paper tries to give some intuition about the outcomes of these struggles in near future and how it could affect the future of social/political stability in Iran.

“Is Regulation Better than Liberalization? Challenge Revisited”

Abstract: This paper shows that monopolies can be more inefficient than what has been already perceived in economic theory. Based on actual cases, I demonstrate this argument with two models. One is a monopolist who cares about her leisure and consumption together, therefore, may not try to minimize her firm’s costs as much as possible, and the other is the case of a monopolist who employs more labor than she needs in order to use unemployment of labor as a threatening tool/bargaining power against government liberalization policies. I find that in both cases, social welfare is lower than what it is under a profit-maximizing monopolist. Interestingly, the models predict that these two monopolists would act the same as a profit-maximizing firm with no inefficiency if they were in a duopolistic competitive setting. I expand this argument to show that regulated monopolies are less attractive than what is perceived by Armstrong and Sappington (2005). The results strengthen the support for unregulated competition versus regulated monopolies in a developing economy.

Papers in Progress

“Impact of Monetary Policy Actions on Uncertainty in the Stock Market”, with Levon Goukasian.

“The Reaction of Hotels and Restaurants Industries to the Monetary Policy Actions”, with Levon Goukasian.

Presentations and Summer Schools

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| Economic Research Forum Conference 2009 Cairo, Egypt | November 7-10, 2009 |
| Pacific Development Conference 2009 San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA | March 14, 2009 |
| H.A.N.D. Economics Forum Los Angeles, CA | December 22-24, 2008 |
| A Course in Applied Econometrics, Imbens and Wooldridge University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI | August 6-8, 2008 |
| AFFI (French Finance Association) International Meeting Paris, France | December 18-19, 2008 |
| Conference on Economics of Iran Urbana-Champagne, Illinois | December 11-13, 2008 |

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| American Real Estate and Urban Economics Association Int'l Conference Istanbul, Turkey | July 4-6, 2008 |
| BREAD Summer School on Development Economics University of Verona, Italy | June 30 – July 5, 2008 |
| Western Economic Association International 2008 Sheraton Hotel, Hawaii | June 29 – July 4 2008 |
| International Academy of Business and Economics 2008 Stockholm, Sweden | June 6-8 2008 |
| Pacific Development Conference 2008 University of California at San Diego, La Jolla, CA | March 15, 2008 |

Research Employment

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| Editorial Assistant Economic Development and Cultural Change Journal | Fall 2007 – Summer 2008 |
| Research Assistant for John Strauss, Department of Economics, USC for Arthur Auerbach, Department of Political Science, USC | Fall 2006 – Fall 2007 Winter 2006 – Fall 2006 |

Teaching Employment (portfolio available upon request)

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| Invited Teaching California State University at Northridge, Dept. of Economics, “Introduction to Economics” California State University at Channel Islands, Business and Economics Dept., “Introduction to Econometrics” | 2008 – 2009 |
| Teaching Assistant Department of Economics, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA Graduate Courses: Financial Markets II, Applied Econometrics Undergraduate Courses: International Finance, Introduction to Econometrics, Economics of Law, The World Economy, Principles of Microeconomics | 2005 - 2008 |

References

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