

Department of Environmental Science and Policy Seminar Series

Agricultural Productivity and Deforestation

Teevrat Garg

University of California, San Diego

DATE: Friday, 2/10/2023 TIME: 10:30 am ROOM: SLAB103

Zoom: <https://bit.ly/3GQ6ZGn>



Abstract: Although improving agricultural productivity is vital to anti-poverty and food security goals, its ecological effects are theoretically ambiguous. Increasing the relative value of agricultural land may spur deforestation, but factor market constraints paired with improvements in existing land productivity may reduce the demand for shifting cultivation. Leveraging the discontinuity in eligibility for a large agricultural extension program, we find that the program reduced deforestation by 13%. The program increased adoption of promoted practices such as manure-use and crop rotation resulting in higher productivity but no increase in cultivated area. Suitably designed programs improving agricultural productivity may also enable conservation.

Bio: Teevrat Garg (he/him) is an Associate Professor of Economics in the School of Global Policy and Strategy at the University of California, San Diego. His research focusses on environmental policy and energy transitions in low- and middle-income countries. His current portfolio of research involves working directly with regional governments and utilities in understanding climate adaptation and decarbonization. He currently serves as a co-editor for the Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (JAERE) and an associate editor for the American Journal of Agricultural Economics (AJAE). His policy engagements include serving as an Academic Advisor to the Green Growth Initiative at the International Growth Center and serving as a Technical Contributor to the 5th National Climate Assessment. His research has been published in the Economic Journal, JAERE, JEEM, and Nature Communications among other journals. He served as a mentor in the inaugural mentorship programs of AERE, the Association for Inclusion and Mentoring in Economics (AIME) and the AEA's Committee on the Status of the LGBTQIA++ Individuals in the Economics Profession (CSQIEP).

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