

Tyra Merker

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PERSONAL

Citizenship: Norwegian
Location: Amsterdam, Netherlands

FIELD

Primary: Industrial Organization
Secondary: Applied Microeconomics, Public Economics, Microeconomic Theory

CURRENT AFFILIATIONS

2022 – Assistant Professor (tenure-track), Amsterdam School of Economics, University of Amsterdam.

2020 – Tribunal member, The Norwegian Competition Appeals Tribunal (Konkurransklagenemnda).
Specialist judicial body with cross-disciplinary expertise in law and economics. The Tribunal hears and decides cases involving appeals of decisions by the Norwegian Competition Authority (Konkurransetilsynet).

EDUCATION

2017 – 2022 Ph.D. in Economics, University of Oslo, Norway.
Advisors: Bård Harstad, Andreas Moxnes, and Tore Nilssen
Jury: Jessie Handbury, Luca Macedoni, Nils-Henrik Mørch von der Fehr

2021 Visiting Scholar, University of Pennsylvania, USA.
Business Economics and Public Policy Department (BEPP), The Wharton School, Fall 2021.

2013 – 2015 M.Phil. in Economics, University of Oslo.
30 ECTS-credit thesis entitled “Corporate Leniency and Incentives for Collusion”

2009 – 2012 BA in Development Studies, University of Oslo.
80 (of 180) ECTS-credits in Economics.
80 (of 180) ECTS-credits in Development subjects.
2-month independent field work in Malawi.

2006 – 2007 75 ECTS-credits in Civil Engineering, NTNU.

WORKING PAPERS

Explaining Uniform Pricing in Retail Markets –The Role of Consumer Self-Sorting.

Abstract: This paper examines the empirical fact that large retail chains choose to set uniform prices across different local markets, forfeiting potentially large profits by not pricing to market. The paper contributes with a new explanation to uniform pricing strategies: heterogeneous consumers self-sort into different product types. This alleviates some concerns about both optimality and distribution. Using a large and novel data set of itemized shopping receipts from the Norwegian grocery market, I offer empirical support for this explanation.

Sorting and the Effect of Consumption Taxes.

Abstract: Consumption taxes on goods that may cause negative externalities, e.g. tobacco, alcohol and sugary products, are frequently referred to as sin taxes. By estimating an average pass-through rate for the taxed category, previous literature estimates welfare and distributional effects of these taxes. Using a simple theoretical model, I show how using an average pass-through rate for the category leads to biased estimates if consumers self-sort. Using an exogenous change in the Norwegian sugar taxes to estimate effects on prices and pass-through rates, I show that pass-through is larger for high-price (and low-elasticity) items. By combining item-level pass-through rates and store-item level demand elasticities, I show that there indeed is a negative correlation between the elasticity of demand and pass-through rate of an item. Using consumer-level data on grocery purchases, I show that items purchased by low-income consumers on average have higher elasticities of demand. The low-income consumers also face smaller pass-through rates, as predicted by my model. The empirical findings highlight that using average pass-through rate per product category will bias estimates of welfare effects of consumption taxes.

Endogenous Cartel Formation and Differentiated Price Competition.

Abstract: Cartels may cause great harm to consumers and economic efficiency. However, literature on endogenous cartel formation with dynamic competition is scarce. This paper is the first to endogenize cartel formation in a model with differentiated products. In a model with symmetric firms, linear costs and quadratic profit functions, I find that the size of a stable cartel decreases (increases) when products become more differentiated (homogeneous). Furthermore, I find that the size of the smallest stable cartel rarely exceeds six to seven firms, as the relative pay-off from free-riding increases faster in cartel size than the pay-off from collusion -- irrespective of industry size. Finally, I find that industry-wide cartels may not be incentive compatible when products are sufficiently homogeneous. Otherwise, the incentive compatibility constraint likely holds.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Market power and investment – The case of technology adoption in the Norwegian grocery industry (with A. Moxnes).

Dynamic Duopoly with Collusion and Horizontal Product Differentiation.

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Asphjell, M.K., Bergh, H.N., Merker, T. and Skaar, J., 2017, Unilateral Effects of Horizontal Mergers with Vertical Relations Between Firms and Other Structural Market Changes. *Review of Industrial Organization*, 51(3), pp.381-394.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Merker T., Kristiansen I.S., Saether, E.M., 2016, Human Resources for Health care in the Nordic economies: successful today, but sustainable tomorrow?. *Health employment and economic growth: an evidence base*. Geneva: World Health Organization, (ed.) Buchan J, Dhillon I, Campbell J

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

- 2020 – 2022 Researcher, University of Oslo.
 Funded by The Global and Local Organization of Production (Globalprod), European Research Council (ERC) Starting grant. With Andreas Moxnes as Principal Investigator.
- 2015 – 2017 Economist, Oslo Economics.
 Oslo-based consultancy firm. Advisor to private parties in several large competition and antitrust cases. Research project for the Norwegian Competition Authority.

HONORS & AWARDS

- 2021 Fulbright Scholar, University of Pennsylvania. Fall 2021.
 Funding from The Fulbright Foundation for research stay at Business Economics and Public Policy Department (BEPP), The Wharton School.
- 2020 Teacher of the year 2020, Department of Economics, University of Oslo
- 2014 Scholarship in Advanced Methods and Research, University of Oslo. 2014.

SERVICE TO UNIVERSITY AND DEPARTMENT

- 2023 – 2024 Co-organizer of the EARIE conference, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2023 Co-organizer of the Tinbergen Institute Workshop on Market Power in Retail Markets
- 2022 – 2023 Member of hiring committee at the international job market, University of Oslo
- 2019 Member of Electoral Board, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Oslo
- 2018 Deputy member of Department Board, Department of Economics, University of Oslo

EDITORIAL SERVICE

- Referee The Journal of the European Economic Association (JEEA), The Review of Economic Studies (ReStud), Review of Industrial Organization

INVITED SEMINARS

- 2023 Valutaseminaret (annual conference of Samfunnsøkonomene)
- 2022 Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, LMU Munich, Copenhagen Business School, University of Amsterdam, Stavanger Business School, University of St.Gallen, BI Norwegian Business School
- 2021 Stockholm School of Economics (Brown Bag Seminar, May), Wharton (BEPP 900 student seminar, September), NHH Norwegian School of Economics (October), OsloMet (November), BI Norwegian Business School (December 2021)
- 2019 University of Oslo's January conference (Januarkonferansen)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2023 Tinbergen Institute workshop
- 2021 National Tax Association's Annual Conference on Taxation (NTA 2021, November, Detroit, Michigan), European Economic Association Annual Congress (EEA 2021, August, online), IIPF Congress (August, online), Scandinavian PhD Seminar (May, online)

- 2020 European Economic Association Annual Congress (EEA 2020, online), Oslo PhD Initiative – PhD Research Seminar (Oslo), Geilo seminar (University of Oslo/Geilo)
- 2019 Faglig pedagogisk dag (in Norwegian), PhD workshop (University of Oslo)
- 2018 European Association for Research in Industrial Economics (EARIE 2018, Athens), European Economic Association Annual Congress (EEA 2018, Cologne)

TEACHING

- 2023 Industrial Organization, undergraduates, University of Amsterdam (*lecturer*)
 Microeconomics 2, graduates, University of Amsterdam (*tutor*)
 Science Lab, undergraduates, University of Amsterdam (*tutor*)
- 2022 Economics of Markets and Organizations, graduates, University of Amsterdam (*tutor*)
- 2021 Strategic Competition (Industrial organization), graduates, University of Oslo (*tutor*)
 Microeconomics 1, undergraduates, University of Oslo (*lecturer*)
- 2019 Strategic Competition (Industrial organization) , graduates (*tutor*)
 Mathematics 1, undergraduates, University of Oslo (*lecturer*)
 Microeconomics 1, undergraduates, University of Oslo (*lecturer*)
- 2018 Strategic Competition (Industrial organization) , graduates (*tutor*)
 Mathematics 1, undergraduates, University of Oslo (*lecturer*)
 Microeconomics 1, undergraduates, University of Oslo (*lecturer*)

Miscellaneous

- Languages Norwegian (native), German (native), English (fluent), Spanish (basic)