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DOCTORAL STUDIES

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

PhD, Economics, Expected completion June 2026

DISSERTATION: “*Essays in the economics of governance and competition*”

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AND REFERENCES

Professor Nikhil Agarwal
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Professor Robert Gibbons
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Professor Tavneet Suri
 MIT Sloan School of Management
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PRIOR EDUCATION

Indian Statistical Institute Delhi
 MS in Quantitative Economics

2020

Indian Institute of Technology Madras
 MTech & BTech in Electrical Engineering

2017

CITIZENSHIP

India

GENDER: Male

LANGUAGES

English (fluent), Hindi (fluent), Malayalam (native), Spanish (A2)

FIELDS

Primary Fields: Industrial Organization, Organizational Economics

Secondary Fields: Microeconomic Theory, Development

MIT Economics

AROON NARAYANAN
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TEACHING EXPERIENCE	Applied Economics for Managers (MBA, MIT course 15.024) Teaching Assistant to Professor Tavneet Suri	2025	
	Advanced Topics in Industrial Organization (graduate, MIT course 14.273) Teaching Assistant to Professors Nikhil Agarwal and Tobias Salz	2024	
	Microeconomic Theory I (graduate, MIT course 14.121) Teaching Assistant to Professor Parag Pathak	2023	
	Industrial Organization: Strategy & Public Policy (undergraduate, MIT course 14.20) Teaching Assistant to Professor Nancy Rose	2023	
	Applied Economics for Managers (executive MBA, MIT course 15.722) Teaching Assistant to Professor Robert Gibbons	2023	
	Organizational Economics (graduate, MIT course 14.282) Teaching Assistant to Professor Robert Gibbons	2022	
	RELEVANT POSITIONS	Business Analyst, McKinsey & Company	2017-18
	FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS	Sloan Africa Fellowship	2025-26
		Hausman Dissertation Fellowship	2024-25
George and Obie Schultz Fund Grant		2023, 2024	
MIT Presidential Fellowship		2020-22	
Gold Medal, Indian Statistical Institute		2020	
Graduate Fellowship, Indian Statistical Institute	2018-20		
PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES	Presentations: Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development	2024	
PUBLICATIONS	“Risk preferences of learning algorithms,” <i>Games and Economic Behavior</i> , 2024. (with Andreas Haupt)		
	“Ex-post implementation with interdependent values,” <i>Games and Economic Behavior</i> , 2023. (with Saurav Goyal)		
	“Single peaked domains with designer uncertainty,” <i>Social Choice and Welfare</i> , 2023.		
	“Coverage analysis in millimeter wave cellular networks with reflections,” <i>IEEE Global Communications Conference</i> , 2017. (with T.V. Sreejith and Radha Krishna Ganti)		

RESEARCH PAPERS

“Governance of Supply Relationships: Evidence from Indian Manufacturing” (Job Market Paper)

How should firms dynamically manage a supplier portfolio to improve contracting outcomes? This paper analyzes a large Indian buyer's policy of promoting high-performing suppliers to higher tiers that receive increased order volume. I estimate a structural dynamic principal-agent model to quantify the policy's value and disentangle its two mechanisms: retaining better suppliers by sorting them based on a persistent type, and mitigating moral hazard by using relational value and induced competition to incentivize effort. A novel two-stage estimation strategy first recovers the buyer's policy using an iterative algorithm to handle unobserved supplier tiers, then estimates a dynamic effort choice model of supplier behavior conditional on this policy. The policy improves performance by 12% over random allocation, with selection effects dominating incentive effects (66% vs. 34% of the total value). The economic value of this relational approach is significant—achieving the same performance improvement in a spot-market benchmark would require 18% higher payments to suppliers. Counterfactual analysis shows that a policy optimized for the estimated environment could improve performance by 28%, but the firm's current policy is more robust to facing a less capable supplier pool.

“Supply Chain Resilience via Partial Integration” (with Vishan Nigam)

How do firms adapt to ensure supply chain resilience? The typical answer, vertical integration, is limited in practice by its high costs and inflexibility. This paper considers partial integration, defined as targeted buyer interventions across firm boundaries, as an alternative. Using novel administrative data from Indian supply chains for fabricated steel products, we show that supplier underinvestment in inputs, stemming from working capital constraints and non-contractible input use, is the primary driver of disruptions in these supply chains. To reduce the incidence of disruptions, the buyer exerts control over supplier processes—through in-person monitoring, contingent contracts, and direct sourcing of raw materials—rather than only using cash advances. This buyer involvement escalates as disruption risk increases: an unanticipated input cost shock leads to direct buyer control of inputs for the most constrained suppliers. We develop a three-stage model that rationalizes these strategies. The model clarifies that buyers control input decisions to prevent resource diversion due to non-contractibility, while allowing suppliers to retain control of production in order to preserve output market incentives. It also predicts that relational buyers with low monitoring and sourcing costs enjoy a comparative advantage in fostering resilient trade with poor regions.

“Interest Caps, Competition, and Strategic Borrowing: Evidence from Kenya” (with Tavneet Suri and Prashant Bharadwaj)

We study Kenya's 2016 interest-rate regulation, which capped bank lending but left one digital platform, called M-Shwari, exempt on the lending side while imposing a deposit-rate floor across all lenders. Using borrower-level administrative data,

survey data, and an RD around the implementation date, we show three main results. First, lending on the exempt platform rose, with the safest borrowers substituting toward cheaper capped credit. Second, riskier borrowers increase their savings to build up their credit limits. Third, on the supply side, M-Shwari raises the limits for the safest borrowers in an attempt to retain them. We build and estimate a simple model of screening and credit limit-setting to interpret these reallocations and compute welfare. The observed carve-out for M-Shwari preserves access for high-risk borrowers but yields a slight aggregate welfare decline relative to pre-policy. However, a uniform (across all lenders) interest rate cap counterfactual generates substantially larger welfare losses by eliminating credit for high-risk borrowers.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

“Disaggregating Organizations: The Effect of CEOs on Firm Markups” (with Kartik Vira)

Do different CEOs within the same firm systematically set different markups, or are markups determined solely by firm-level optimization? To answer this question, we estimate a Two-Way Fixed Effects (TWFE) model of firm markups on CEO and firm dummies. We use the De Loecker et al. (2020) framework to estimate firm-year level markups, and use CEO movements between firms to identify CEO effects on markups. We address limited mobility bias using the leave-out estimator of Kline et al. (2020). To enable meaningful comparisons across different connected sets of firms and CEOs, we apply the normalization procedure of Best et al. (2023). After applying these corrections, we estimate that CEO effects explain 10-15% of the overall variance in markups.

“Competition and Information Sharing” (with Lia Petrose)

In many markets, data providers allow exchange of confidential commercial information between firms, with ambiguous effects on competition. Most of the conduct testing literature restricts the information sets of firms to be complete, or at least known. We consider a case where membership in a data aggregator’s subscription service is unobserved to the analyst, but the distribution of outcomes and some components of costs are. We develop a sequential method to identify firms’ latent information structures and test between alternative conduct models. First, the information structure is identified using a firm’s response to rivals’ private cost shocks. Then, firm conduct is identified using standard exclusion restrictions conditional on the information structure. We discuss an application of this method to the poultry processing industry, where an aggregator (AgriStats) shares members’ private cost information for a subscription fee.