

Aranya Chakraborty

PHD CANDIDATE, DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS, MCGILL UNIVERSITY

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Personal Details

Date of Birth April 24, 1993

Citizenship India

Research Interests Development Economics, Applied Microeconomics

Education

McGill University

Montreal, Canada

PHD IN ECONOMICS

2017-Present

- *PhD Supervisory Committee*: Professor Sonia Laszlo (Primary), Professor Matthieu Chemin, and Professor Francesco Amodio.
- *Completed written Comprehensive Examinations* in Development Economics, Industrial Organization, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics.

University of Calcutta

Kolkata, India

M.Sc. IN ECONOMICS

2014-2016

- *Special Papers*: Game Theory and Information Economics, Advanced Econometrics, Resource and Environmental Economics.
- *Group Project Title*: "Financial Integration, Stock Price Volatility and Economic Growth- A Panel Data Analysis in BRICS Nations".

Ramakrishna Mission Residential College (Autonomous), Narendrapur

Kolkata, India

B.Sc. (HONOURS) IN ECONOMICS

2011-2014

- *General Courses* in Statistics and Mathematics.

Experience

Department of Economics, McGill University

Montreal, Canada

TEACHING ASSISTANT

2017 - Present

- ECON 313: Economic Development 1, Winter, 2021-22 & Fall, 2021.
- ECON 314: Economic Development 2, Winter, 2019-20, & 2022.
- ECON 416: Topics in Economic Development 2, Winter, 2021.
- ECON 473: Income Distribution, Winter, 2021 & Fall, 2021.
- ECON 305: Industrial Organization, Fall, 2019.
- ECON 230: Microeconomic Theory, Fall, 2018.
- ECON 227: Economic Statistics, Winter, 2018.
- ECON 310: Intro to Behavioural Economics, Fall, 2017 & 2020.

Department of Economics, McGill University

Montreal, Canada

RESEARCH ASSISTANT FOR PROFESSOR SONIA LASZLO

2020-2021

- Analyzed data collected through a lab-in-the-field experiment with Peruvian potato farmers.
- Conducted review of the related literature.

Skills

Languages English (Fluent), Bengali (Native), Hindi (Native)

Programming Stata, R, Python, EViews (Advanced); Matlab (Basic)

Data Science Tools Git, Jupyter Notebook, GIS, Google Earth Engine

Others LaTeX, Microsoft Office

Professional Activities

CONFERENCE AND SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS

2022 Seventeenth CIREQ Ph.D. Students' Conference (June)

Montreal, Canada

2022 CEA-CDESG Annual Conference (June)

Ottawa, Canada

2022 CIREQ Lunch Seminar (April, July)

Montreal, Canada

2015 Conference on WTO, Trade and Agriculture organized by CWS-IIFT (October)

New Delhi, India

ADDITIONAL COURSES/ WORKSHOPS COMPLETED

2022	<i>GIS for Quantitative Spatial Data Analysis</i> by Wheeler Institute for Business and Development	Virtual
2022	<i>African History through the lens of Economics</i> by Wheeler Institute for Business and Development	Virtual
2022	<i>BREAD-IGC Virtual PhD Course</i>	Virtual
2021	<i>Data Science Tools Workshop</i> organized by Montreal×Montevideo Econ Lab	Virtual
2021	<i>Complex Network Analysis: Tools for Economic Development</i> by Pau Milán in Barcelona GSE Summer School	Virtual
2021	<i>Mini-Course on Causal Inference</i> by Scott Cunningham in McGill University	Virtual
2018	<i>Introduction to GIS Methods in Economics</i> by Giorgio Chiovelli and Sebastian Hohmann in McGill University	Montreal, Canada

Professional Services

ORGANIZER

2020-2021 *Applied Micro Breakfast*, Department of Economics, McGill University Virtual

MEMBERSHIPS

- 2022- Canadian Economics Association (CEA)
- 2022- Northeast Agricultural and Resource Economics Association (NAREA)

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

2020- *PhD Representative*, McGill Economics Graduate Association (MEGA) Montreal, Canada

COMMUNITY SERVICES

- 2021 Volunteer for *International Buddy Program*, McGill University
- 2011 Volunteer for *National Service Scheme*, India from Ramakrishna Mission Residential College (Autonomous)

OTHER SERVICES

2022 Chair for the session on *Technology, Development and Inequality* in CEA-CDESG Annual Conference Ottawa, Canada

Awards, Grants, and Fellowships

SCHOLARSHIPS

- 2021 *Graduate Award* from Professor Sonia Laszlo, McGill University
 - 2021 *FRQSC Stipend* from Professor Francesco Amodio, McGill University
 - 2021 *SSHRC Stipend* from Professor Francesco Amodio, McGill University
 - 2020 *SSHRC Stipend* from Professor Francisco Ruge-Murcia, McGill University
 - 2019 *McCall MacBain Fellowship*, McGill University
 - 2019 *FRQSC Stipend* from Professor Laura Lasio, McGill University
 - 2019 *CIHR Stipend* from Professor Erin Strumpf, McGill University
 - 2018 *Bank of Canada Stipend* from Professor Francisco Ruge-Murcia, McGill University
- 2017-2021 *Graduate Excellence Fellowship*, McGill University

AWARDS

- 2015 Professor Dhirendranath Datta Memorial Prize for securing First Class (First position) in Economics Honours in the Degree Examinations of 2014, Ramakrishna Mission Residential College (Autonomous).

Working Papers

- “Optimal Network Based Targeting for Technology Adoption in Developing Countries” (Job Market Paper)
Abstract: How do we use existing social ties to improve the adoption of a new technology? I explore optimal network-based targeting when the expected benefit associated with the new technology varies at the household level. In particular, I focus on two types of targeting: targeting households central to the network and targeting based on the likelihood of adoption. I develop a theoretical framework where initially uninformed agents engage in DeGroot learning to decide whether or not to get fully informed about a new technology. Conditional on being fully informed, they then decide whether or not to adopt the new technology. The model predicts the possibility of low information equilibria where nobody will adopt the new technology even if it's efficient for some of them to do so, and targeting is needed. My simulations suggest that the optimal targeting strategy in such a scenario relies on the underlying heterogeneity in the population. If heterogeneity is high in terms of the applicability of the new technology, targeting based on the likelihood of adoption performs better than centrality-based targeting. Conversely, centrality-based targeting works better if the population is more homogeneous. I test these predictions using data from Malawi and provide evidence supporting my theoretical model. I argue that population heterogeneity in benefits from a technology matters for the success or failure of alternative targeting strategies that promote that technology.

- “The Role of Experience in Learning for Index Insurance Products: Evidence from Rural Kenya”

Abstract: This research focuses on understanding the role of experience in learning about index insurance products. In particular, I study the effect of payout and disaster experience in shaping the demand and interest for index insurance products. I develop a theoretical model that formalizes the scenario where households are learning about the covariate risk they face, as well as the mapping of this covariate risk to the index insurance product that insures against it. The model predicts the impact of payout experience to be dependent on the households’ level of optimism/ pessimism regarding the product design, and a positive effect of disaster experience on the demand and interest for the product. I test these predictions using data from Index-Based Livestock Insurance (IBLI), Kenya. My results show that receiving a payout decreases the extensive and intensive margin of demand for the group that received the payout, with the same group losing some interest in the product after the payout. Moreover, I find evidence that the effect of payout on the outcome variables can be explained by optimistic households updating their beliefs about the product design downward, following a payout. Additional analysis suggests that policy interventions on their own may not be able to help households overcome information frictions. However, interventions can be used as tools for enhancing households’ learning from experience.

Work In Progress

- “Assessing the Impact of Judicial Independence in Developing Countries: Evidence from Rural Bangladesh” (with Matthieu Chemin)
- “Beliefs about Uncertain Technologies: Experimental Evidence from a Coordination Game in Peru” (with Jim Engle-Warnick, Javier Escobal, and Sonia Laszlo)

Book Chapters

- “Food Insecurity, Price Volatility and Trade: A Panel Data Analysis in Developing Countries” (with Panchanan Das and Swayambhu Mukherjee), **Indian Agriculture under Multilateral and Regional Trade Agreements - Competitiveness and Food Security**, Sharma and Bathla (eds.), Bookwell, Delhi, 2017, 177-194.

Other Papers

- “Industrial Performance in West Bengal: Analysis of Technical Efficiency with ASI Data” (with Panchanan Das and Swayambhu Mukherjee), 2016.

References

Professor Sonia Laszlo

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