Vinayak Iyer

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PERSONAL INFORMATION — NATIONALITY - Indian

PLACEMENT INFORMATION

Co-Chairs
Donald Davis, drd28@columbia.edu
Suresh Naidu, sn2430@columbia.edu

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Amy Devine
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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Economics, Columbia University   **2016- 2022 (Expected)**

M.A. Economics, Delhi School of Economics   **2013 - 2015**

B.Sc. Economics, St. Xavier's College, Kolkata   **2010 - 2013**

RESEARCH INTERESTS — Urban Economics, Industrial Organization, Applied Microeconomics

PAPERS

What *Drives* the Efficiency in Ride Sharing Markets? Evidence from Austin, Texas (*with Motaz al-Chanati*)
(*Nominated for Best Paper, Econometric Society Meeting, Delhi School of Economics 2020*)

Ridesharing platforms, who act as intermediaries in transport markets, improve upon traditional taxis along two key dimensions: surge pricing and centralized matching. We study how and why existing inefficiencies are solved by these two features and evaluate how alternate pricing and matching rules can improve outcomes. To this end, we develop a structural model of the ridesharing market with three components: (1) dynamically optimizing drivers who make entry, exit and search decisions; (2) stochastic demand; and (3) a matching technology. We evalaute the welfare effects of surge and matching separately. We also implement a simple change in the pricing rule by making it more flexible which is able to address both static and dynamic inefficiencies , thus generating large welfare gains for all agents. We conclude by drawing policy implications for improving the competitiveness of traditional taxis.

Informational Barriers to Market Access: Experimental Evidence from Liberian Firms (*with Jonas Hjort and Golvine de Rochambeau*), NBER WP No 27662

Evidence suggests that many firms in poor countries stagnate because they cannot access growth-conducive markets. We hypothesize that overlooked informational barriers distort market access. To investigate, we gave a random subset of mediumsized Liberian firms vouchers for a week-long program that exclusively teaches "sellership": how to sell to corporations, governments, and other large buyers. Firms that participate win three times as many formal contracts a year later. The impact is heterogeneous: informational sales barriers bind for about a quarter of firms. Three years post-training, these firms continue to win desirable contracts, are more likely to operate, and employ more workers.

Value of Public Transport and Landlord Market Power : Evidence from NYC (*with Lucas Husted*)

This paper studies how individuals across the income distribution value access to public transit and how this shapes the rental housing market. To study this question, we use the announced closure of the L train in NYC to study how rents were affected in the housing market and how the mobility decisions of individuals across the income distribution changed. We find that low-income households value the subway more than high-income households, while high-income households likely value other neighborhood amenities more. We show evidence of landlord market power and find that landlords give existing low-income households a higher discount on their rent to incentivize them to stay in the affected neighborhoods. From a transportation policy perspective, one must keep the dynamics of other neighborhood amenities in mind while evaluating whether intended beneficiaries benefit in the long run.

Transparency and Polarization of Political Speech : Evidence from Canada (*with William Labasi Samartino*)

This paper studies how MPs in the Candian parliament modified their speeches post the televisation of parliamentary debates in 1977. Using NLP techniques on text data from the Hansard, we find that post the televisation of debates, speeches of MPs who were younger (in Parliament) become more polarized/distinct from their party manifesto relative to older (in Parliament) MPs. The effects are not persistent in the long run.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS	Dissertation Fellowship, Columbia University	2021
	NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research in Economics ($24300)	2020
	PER Research Grant ($5000)	2020
	GSAS Matching Travel Grant	2019
	Marion B. Stewart and Marcia E. Glanz Fund, Columbia University	2019
	PER Summer RA Fellowship, Columbia University	2017, 2018
	Department of Economics Fellowship, Columbia University	2016 - 2021
	Dean's Fellowship, Columbia University	2016 - 2021
	Professor Balvir and Ranjana Singh Memorial Scholarship	2014-15
	Krishna Raj Summer Fellowship, Delhi School of Economics	2014-15
	National (CAS) Scholarship, Delhi School of Economics	2013-14
TEACHING AWARDS	Wueller Award for Best TA for Masters	2020
	Wueller Award for Best TA for Masters	2019
	Wueller Award for Best TA for Principles (Runner Up)	2018
WORKSHOPS	Chicago Price Theory Summer Camp	2019
CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS	Urban Economics Association Virtual Meeting	2020
	Winter School (Delhi School of Economics)	2020
	ACEGD, ISI Delhi	2019
WORK EXPERIENCE	Economist Intern, Amazon	Jun - Aug 2021
	RA for Jonas Hjort, Columbia University	Jan - Aug 2018
	RA for Navin Kartik, Columbia University	June-Dec 2017
	RA for Anirban Kar, Delhi School of Economics	2015-2016

	RA for Rohini Somanathan, Delhi School of Economics	2014-2015
	Research Fellow, Krishna Raj Summer Fellowship	Summer 2014

TEACHING EXPERIENCE		
	Math Methods for Economists (Masters), Columbia University	Fall 2018-2020
	Microeconomics II (Masters), Columbia University	Spring 2019
	Math Camp (PhD), Columbia University	Summer 2018
	Principles of Economics (Undergraduate), Columbia University	Spring 2018
	Principles of Economics (Undergraduate), Columbia University	Fall 2017

TECHNICAL SKILLS — Python, Julia, R, Stata, SQL, Matlab, Hadoop, Spark, Hive, Scala

LANGUAGES KNOWN — English, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil (Native)

REFERENCES

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