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REFERENCES

Imran Rasul

University College London

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London School of Economics

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University College London

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Placement director: **Franck Portier**, University College London, f.portier@ucl.ac.uk

POSITIONS

The London School of Economics - Post-doctoral Researcher

2025 - Present

The Institute for Fiscal Studies - Research Associate

2025 - Present

Harvard Kennedy School, CID - Post-doctoral Visiting Fellow

Fall 2025

The Institute for Fiscal Studies - Research Officer

2022 - 2025

EDUCATION

University College London - PhD in Economics

2016 - Nov 2023

-MRes awarded with Distinction

University College London - MSc in Economic Policy

2011 - 2012

-Awarded with Distinction and *Best Overall Performance* Prize

University of Florence - MSc in Economics

2009 - 2011

-Awarded with Honours (110/110 cum laude)

Copenhagen Business School - Erasmus Exchange Program

2008

University of Florence - BSc in Economics

2005 - 2008

-Awarded with Honours (110/110 cum laude)

RESEARCH FIELDS

Development Economics, Labor Economics, Applied Microeconomics

JOB MARKET PAPER

“The Suppression of Female Labor Supply in India: Evidence on the Roles of Household Bargaining and Spousal Expectations”

Presented at: OxDev24, ESPE25, Harvard CID Xchange, AYEW

Coverage: [WB Development Impact Blog](#)

Abstract: A large gap exists between the aspirations of Indian women and their actual rates of labor market participation. This paper studies how intra-household bargaining dynamics and expectations contribute to this gap and the resulting low female labor force participation (FLFP). I collect individual-level matched data from 2,200 spouses in Uttar Pradesh, measuring expected changes in household outcomes conditional on female labor market outcomes, together with individual preferences over these outcomes. A novel empirical fact emerges: husbands in single-income couples expect large utility costs from FLFP, driven by a loss of control over household resources and overall bargaining power. These expectations, however, are misaligned from those held by their wives and fellow men whose wife works for pay. I rationalize these findings through a collective household model with endogenous bargaining and no commitment. The model implies an inefficiently low level of FLFP, driven by the primary decision maker’s incentive to maintain their bargaining power. I validate these findings through a field experiment, finding 40% lower take-up of a real-world job offer when women have to negotiate participation with husbands holding more pessimistic beliefs.

PROJECTS

Published:

“Safe Spaces for Teenage Girls in a Time of Crisis”, joint with Oriana Bandiera, Niklas Buehren, Markus Goldstein and Imran Rasul, 2025, Journal of the European Economic Association

Abstract: Adolescent girls across low-income countries face disadvantages stemming from limited agency over their bodies and barriers to investing in their human capital. We study how these outcomes are shaped in times of aggregate crisis, in the context of the 2014-6 Ebola epidemic in Sierra Leone. This is a setting in which adolescent girls have long faced disadvantage because of a high prevalence of sexual exploitation and violence towards them. Our study is based around an evaluation of a club-based intervention for young women implemented during the epidemic. We track 2700 girls aged 12-18 from the eve of the epidemic in 2014 to just prior to when Sierra Leone was declared Ebola free in 2016. The club-based intervention provides a safe space where girls can spend time away from men, receive advice on reproductive health, vocational training and/or microfinance. During the epidemic all schools were closed. We show that without the protection of time in school, in control villages teenage girls spent more time with men, pregnancy rates rose sharply, and their school enrolment dropped postepidemic. The provision of a safe space breaks this causal chain: it enables girls in treated villages to allocate time away from men and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies. These effects are most pronounced in places where girls face the highest predicted pregnancy risks. In such locations, the intervention also increases school re-enrolment rates post-epidemic. To further pin down mechanisms, we exploit a second layer of randomization of input bundles offered by clubs. This reinforces the idea that the safe space component is critical to driving outcomes for teenage girls. Our analysis has implications for school closures during health crisis in contexts where young women face sexual violence, highlighting the protective and lasting role safe spaces can provide in such times.

“Economic Development and the Organization of Labour: Evidence from the Jobs of the World Project”, joint with Oriana Bandiera, Ahmed Elsayed and Antron Heil, 2022, Journal of the European Economic Association.

Abstract: The Jobs of the World Project is a public resource designed to enable research on jobs and poverty across and within countries over the entire development spectrum. At its core is a new data set assembled by harmonising Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and National Censuses (IPUMS) for all countries and all years after 1990 where data is available. We use the data to show how the nature of jobs and their allocation vary within countries by wealth and gender and across countries by stages of development. We discuss evidence that shows how disparities at the micro level lead to a misuse of human potential that links individual poverty to national income. **“Young Adults and**

Labor Markets in Africa”, joint with Oriana Bandiera, Ahmed Elsayed and Cline Zipfel, 2022, Journal of Economic Perspectives.

Abstract: Every year, millions of young adults join the labor market in Africa. This paper harmonizes surveys and censuses from 68 low- and middle-income countries to compare their job prospects to those of their counterparts in other low-income regions. We show that employment rates are similar at similar levels of development but that young adults in Africa are less likely to have a salaried job, especially when the size of their cohort is large. Building on existing evidence on the impacts of interventions targeting both the demand and supply sides of the labor market, we discuss policy priorities for boosting the growth of salaried job creation in the region..

Working Papers:

“Legacies of Conflict: Experiences, Self-efficacy and the Formation of Conditional Trust” joint with Niklas Buehren , Markus Goldstein and Imran Rasul (submitted)

Abstract: Exposure to armed conflict in early life is a traumatic experience, affecting 400 million children worldwide. We combine theory, measurement and evidence to study how psychological legacies of conflict mediate the relationship between exposure to conflict and the long-term formation of trust preferences. Our analysis is based on a sample of 3900 women born during the Sierra Leonean civil war and surveyed 14 years later. We first develop a framework describing the link between exposure to conflict and trust. This makes precise what individuals have in mind when expressing conditional trust in others, and establishes the role of self-efficacy in linking conflict and trust. Our empirical analysis then shows that exposure to conflict significantly increases self-efficacy, and through this channel, conflict leads conditional trust to rise and for outright trust of others to fall, relative to those never exposed to conflict. To further microfound how exposure to conflict translates into psychological legacies, we construct a granular typology of experiences of conflict, combining information on age of exposure to conflict and recall of victimization. We use this to show how direct exposure, memories and trauma, and narratives of conflict from others each distinctively shape self-efficacy. Finally, we show how our model can help reconcile heterogeneous findings across conflict scenarios, and suggest avenues for future work on the more general role of psychological legacies from traumatic shocks early in life on the long-term formation of economic preferences.

“Seclusion and Women’s Time: Descriptive Evidence from India” joint with Alison Andrew (R&R Economic Development and Cultural Change)

Abstract: We use rich time-use data on where, and how, individuals spend their time to explore women's seclusion in India. We document extremely high levels of seclusion with the median woman leaving home for just 0.5 hours/day. Seclusion has increased markedly over the past two decades, particularly amongst poorer and less-educated women, although richer and more-educated women remain the most secluded. Both between- and within-activity differences in seclusion contribute to the gender gap and, within market work, women specialize in jobs suitable for homeworking but these are lower paid. Our findings suggest households are willing to pay for women's seclusion.

"**Labor Misallocation and Public-Sector Performance**" joint with Enrico Miglino

Abstract: Leveraging personnel and intervention data from the Italian Fire and Rescue Service, we study how allocative frictions affect public sector performance. First, we document persistent delays in managerial turnover: retiring managers take months to be replaced. Second, exploiting delayed turnover and managerial rotations, we show that shortages of middle managers significantly slow interventions, while the absence of top managers has no short or long-run effects. Finally, we show that dispersion in marginal performance to pay is an observable sufficient statistic to evaluate labor misallocation in public organizations and estimate that intervention times are 9.3 percent longer than under the efficient allocation.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

- 2022 VisitINPS Fellowship: "*Flexible Employment and State Effectiveness: The case of Wildfires*"
- 2019 IGC grant: "*Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents in Sierra Leone*", joint with O. Bandiera, N. Buehren, M. Goldstein, I. Rasul
- 2018 UCL ODA grant: "*Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents in Sierra Leone*", joint with O. Bandiera, N. Buehren, M. Goldstein, I. Rasul
- 2018 IGC Graduate Call: "*Informal Taxation and Redistribution: a study of community driven provision of public goods in Myanmar*"
- 2017 ESRC: Funded PhD Studentship at the Institute for Fiscal Studies
- 2012 UCL MSc Economic Policy: *Best Overall Performance Prize*
- 2012 Tuscany Regional Council: Higher Education Scholarship for MSc abroad

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Issues in Development Economics, ECON0030 (BSc)	2019-2021
– Teaching assistant for Marco Vera-Hernandez and Valerie Lechene	
Intermediate Microeconomics, ECON0013 (BSc)	2018-2022
– Teaching assistant for Martin Cripps and Ian Preston	
Applied Economics, ECON0004 (BSc)	2018-2019
– Teaching assistant for Dunli Li	
UCL Department of Economics: <i>Peers Recognition Award</i>	2021, 2022
UCL Department of Economics: <i>Best TA Award</i>	2020, 2021
UCL Student Choice Award, 3 nominations: <i>Inspiring Teaching Delivery, Excellent Personal Tutoring, Exceptional Feedback</i>	2020
UCL Student Choice Award, nomination: <i>Excellent Personal Tutoring</i>	2019

REFEREE

Econometrica, Journal of Political Economy, The Quarterly Journal of Economics, The Economic Journal, G2LM|LIC.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

G2LM LIC , Project Manager, Jobs of the World Project	2021 - 2023
International Growth Centre, Myanmar , Country Economist	2012-2016

LANGUAGES

R, Stata, Matlab, English (fluent), Italian (native), Spanish (intermediate)