Canishk Naik

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FIELDS

Public Economics, Behavioural Economics

EDUCATION

PhD Economics, LSE   2021 – present
    Advisors: Johannes Spinnewijn, Nava Ashraf, Daniel Reck

    Visiting Research Fellow in Economics, Brown University   Spring 2022

MRes Economics *with Distinction*, LSE   2019 – 2021

MSc Applicable Mathematics *with Distinction*, LSE   2017 – 2018

BA Mathematics, University of Cambridge   2014 – 2017

WORKING PAPERS

"Mental Health and the Targeting of Social Assistance" *(Job Market Paper)*

> This paper demonstrates that high-need individuals with mental illnesses are screened-out of receiving social assistance, implying barriers-to-access are too high. I develop a theoretical framework which shows we must look past average take-up rates in order to identify whether the neediest individuals also face the highest costs of overcoming barriers, which would indicate ineffective targeting. Additionally identifying take-up responses to changes in benefits and barriers is sufficient to evaluate welfare effects. I empirically estimate these responses using quasi-experimental policy variation and administrative data from the population of the Netherlands. I find people with poor mental health have an 80% higher cost of take-up barriers compared to those with good mental health. People with mental disorders also need benefits twice as much. These estimates imply reducing barriers to take-up would be a 2.3× more effective policy than increasing benefits.

"Intrapersonal Utility Comparisons as Interpersonal Utility Comparisons", with Daniel Reck (UMD)

> We consider the optimal policy problem of a benevolent planner, who is uncertain about an individual's true preferences because of inconsistencies in revealed preferences across behavioral frames. We adapt theories of expected utility maximization and ambiguity aversion to characterize the planner's objective, which results in welfarist criteria similar to social welfare functions, with intrapersonal frames replacing interpersonal types. Under paternalistic risk aversion or ambiguity aversion, a policy is less desirable to the planner, holding all else fixed, when it leads to more disagreement about welfare from revealed preferences. We map some examples of behavioral models into our framework and describe how this notion of robustness plays out in applied settings.

"A Welfare Analysis of Public Housing Allocation Mechanisms", with Neil Thakral (Brown University)

> When allocating scarce resources such as public housing units to applicants in a waiting list, welfare depends on applicants' preferences (match values and waiting costs) as well as their choices (which may involve errors). To trade off between allowing agents to wait for better matches and prioritizing agents with high waiting costs, allocation mechanisms impose restrictions on choices. Public housing allocation mechanisms in the UK restrict the set of available options that an applicant may accept, while mechanisms in the US restrict the number of times an applicant may reject. We examine how these different ways of restricting choices influence welfare, both theoretically and empirically. Using data on preferences for public housing in the US and the UK, we show how welfare compares under rationality and explore the sensitivity of the mechanisms to choice-error.

WORK IN PROGRESS

"The Socio-Economic Determinants of Mental Health", with Jonathan Kolstad (UC Berkeley), Will Parker (LSE) and Johannes Spinnewijn (LSE)

> This paper documents and analyzes the relationship between socio-economic factors and key measures of mental health. We demonstrate a sharp deterioration of mental health below an income threshold around the poverty line, while the impact of income beyond the threshold level are remarkably flat. The persistence of low socio-economic status further increases the risk of poor mental health. We find that the socio-economic gradients are strongest for working-age individuals, are not driven by access to health care and mostly explained by work status. Big economic events such as physical health shocks and job losses seem not to contribute much to the overall gradient. Rather, the evidence suggests social drift as the primary mechanism: those with poor mental health sort into lower incomes over the lifecycle.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Presentations:
2024: LSE Public Economics Work in Progress Seminar, Dutch Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB), LSE CEP Wellbeing Seminar, IFS-CAGE Workshop on the Economics of Mental Health, IIPF Annual Congress, NTA Annual Congress.
2023: LSE Public Economics Work in Progress Seminar, briq Summer School in Behavioral Economics participant.
2022: SJDM Annual Meeting (Poster), Brown University Theory/Experimental Lunch Seminar, LSE Public Economics Work in Progress Seminar.
2021: UEA North American Meeting, LSE Public Economics Work in Progress Seminar.

Experience:

Research Assistant to Daniel Reck, LSE	Summer 2020
Economist, The Behaviouralist	2019 – 2021

GRANTS AND AWARDS

LSE Class Teacher Award (*Highly Commended in 2024*)	2023, 2024
STICERD Grant. *£9,677.29*	2022

> Awarded for the project "Mental Health and the Targeting of Social Assistance".

Race Equity Innovation Fund. *£2,000*	2022

> Awarded for the project "Review of the Economics Curriculum", together with other members of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee in Economics (DICE) at LSE

Excellence in Education Award, LSE School of Public Policy	2022, 2023
Economic and Social Research Council Doctoral Studentship	2019 – 2024
Economics Departmental Fellowship, LSE	2019 – 2024
Haya Freedman Prize for Best MSc Dissertation, LSE	2018
Top Overall Performance MSc Applicable Mathematics, LSE	2018

TEACHING AND OUTREACH

Teaching:

LSE School of Public Policy (Graduate): *Public Economics for Public Policy*	2022 – 2024
LSE Economics Dept (Graduate): *Intro Probability and Statistics (math camp)*	2022 – 2024
LSE Economics Dept (Undergraduate): *First-year Micro- and Macroeconomics*	2021 – 2023

Outreach:

Organiser of LSE Public Economics Work in Progress Seminar	2022 – 2023
Applicant Mentor for the LSE Economics PhD AMP	2020 – present
Founding member of LSE Diversity and Inclusion Committee in Economics	2020 – present