

# Kartik Srivastava

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<b>Education</b>	<b>Harvard Kennedy School</b> , Cambridge, MA, United States	August 2020 – Present
	PhD in Public Policy (Economics)	

<b>Yale University</b> , New Haven, CT, United States	August 2013 – May 2017
B.A. in Economics (with Distinction)	
B.S. in Mechanical Engineering (with Distinction)	

<b>Fields</b>	Development Economics
	Labor Economics

<b>References</b>	<b>Emily Breza</b> Littauer Center M-28 Cambridge, MA 02138 ebreza@fas.harvard.edu	<b>Asim Ijaz Khwaja</b> 79 John F. Kennedy Street Cambridge, MA 02138 khwaja@hks.harvard.edu	<b>Eliana La Ferrara</b> 79 John F. Kennedy Street Cambridge, MA 02138 ela Ferrara@hks.harvard.edu
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<b>Fellowships and awards</b>	Best Paper Award, QMUL Economics and Finance PhD Workshop 2025 Weiss Distinguished PhD Research Paper Award, NEUDC 2024 Dissertation Completion Fellowship, Harvard Griffin GSAS
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<b>Teaching</b>	The Economics of Human Mobility (Ec 1346); for <b>Gabriel Kreindler</b>	Fall '22, Fall '23, Fall '24
	The Global Economy (Ec 1535); for <b>Pol Antras</b>	Fall '24

<b>Research experience</b>	<b>Harvard Economics Department</b> , Cambridge, MA, United States	September 2022 – August 2025
	Research Assistant for Gabriel Kreindler	
	Research Assistant for Emily Breza	
	<b>The World Bank</b> , Washington DC, United States	January 2019 – August 2020
	Research Assistant, Development Impact Evaluation (DIME) and Identification for Development (ID4D)	
	<b>J-PAL South Asia</b> , New Delhi, India	April 2018 – December 2019
	Research Assistant for Karthik Muralidharan, Paul Niehaus, and Sandip Sukhtankar	

<b>Job market paper</b>	<b>Familiar strangers: Evidence from referral-based hiring experiments in India</b> In developing-country labor markets, search frictions and network-based hiring sustain high churn and exclude poorly-connected workers, suggesting a misallocation. I test whether redirecting referrals toward underrepresented minority workers in such segmented labor markets can raise both equity and productivity. In an Indian manufacturing firm, I experimentally increased the share of referral invitations allocated to minority lower caste incumbents. The policy raised their employment share by 15 pp (62%) and cut monthly turnover by 4 pp (41%); team output rose by 0.09 s.d. (5%), with no decline in cohesion, contrary to common concerns about mixed teams. A supplementary lab-in-field experiment pins down the mechanism: when lower caste workers enter as outsiders rather than via referrals, cohesion falls 9% and output 22%, implying recruitment mode – not entrant identity – drives short-run costs. At the firm, supervisors exposed to the policy continued to allocate referrals to lower caste workers after the intervention concluded, consistent with Bayesian learning which I rationalize with a dynamic model. Lower caste referral candidates saw large gains in job offers and employment, with no detectable displacement of upper-caste candidates. Redirecting referrals can thus reassign jobs toward workers with low outside options, improving their labor market prospects as well as firm performance.
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## Working papers

### **The long shadow of feudalism: Concentration of land and labor market power in India**

*with Steven Brownstone*

Land is power: both state and non-state actors have understood this for centuries, but the causal impacts of land concentration are notoriously difficult to study. We study how differences in village land concentration stemming from the granting of feudal titles hundreds of years ago affect present-day labor markets in India. We exploit variation in land tenure systems at a more granular level than is seen in the literature on the long-run effects of land tenure systems, implementing a regression discontinuity along feudal borders that no longer correspond with modern administrative boundaries. Large discontinuities in land concentration persist across these boundaries, with the smallest land parcels in previously feudal areas 19% larger than their analogs in non-feudal areas. These differences are associated with 7% lower agricultural wages for women, but not men who are more able to travel and seek outside options. Importantly, these differences in wages persist despite no differences in yields, aggregate labor demand or supply, output prices, or other non-labor agricultural inputs. Village elected bodies in feudal areas scuttle the implementation of the key workfare program designed to provide agricultural labor with an outside employment option, with 71% fewer person-days offered during peak agricultural months when large landowners demand labor, and no difference the lean season when the program is most active. We show that the effect on the workfare program likely operates through caste-based links between large landowners and village elected representatives. This work emphasizes the effects of land inequality on local labor markets as a key mechanism through which inequities persist, and the value of outside options for workers where employers have market power.

### **Between trust and trade: on informal credit networks in India**

*with Layane Alhorr and Alp Sungu*

We study store credit, a deferred payment system offered by small businesses to customers across the developing world. We collected data from local shops in an urban Indian settlement, randomly offering subsidies for stores to provide either store credit, a price discount, or a business-as-usual control. Store credit increased businesses' market share by encouraging more visits and higher spending. Even after subsidies ended, stores continued to extend credit to treated customers. Customers who received credit during the experiment were equally likely to repay as stores' standard credit customers and shifted some spending from non-credit stores to credit-offering ones. We find suggestive evidence that credit helps customers smooth consumption, and increase consumption expenditure overall. Our results underscore the role of small businesses as local lenders and explain the prevalence of store credit for consumption smoothing and market access in developing countries. We suggest that customers in these settings have an unmet demand for credit but struggle to demonstrate creditworthiness, leading stores to under-experiment with lending. These findings indicate potential for increased credit access by subsidizing business experiments and reducing lending default risks.

### **The long-run effects of targeting schooling investments at historically disadvantaged groups**

*with Naveen Kumar*

We use admissions lotteries to estimate the long-run effects of a residential middle school system targeted at historically disadvantaged communities in India. The school system boosts years of schooling, test scores, college attendance, senior secondary school graduation, and labor force participation. However, we also find that treated students have substantially smaller and more caste-homogenous networks. While treated students have better observable employability, their labor market outcomes are weakly worse, likely due to slower job arrival rates as a consequence of more homogenous networks. Our findings illustrate the impacts of delivering high-quality educational infrastructure at historically disadvantaged groups, while also highlighting the importance of measuring long-term and non-test score outcomes in evaluating the effectiveness of education programs.

## Select ongoing work

### **Targeting and take-up of occupation-specific welfare programs**

*with Sabareesh Ramachandran*

### **High frequency monitoring in India's Public Distribution System**

*with Gaurav Chiplunkar, Karthik Muralidharan, Paul Niehaus and Sandip Sukhtankar*

<b>Seminars and conferences</b> (* scheduled)	<b>2025</b>	North East Universities Development Consortium*	Tufts
		IGC/EGC Firms, Trade and Development Conference*	Yale
		Advances with Field Experiments	UChicago
		Symposium on Economic Experiments in Developing Countries	Bonn
		HEC Economics PhD Conference	HEC, Paris
		Diversity and Human Capital Workshop	Exeter
		Warwick Economics PhD Conference	Warwick
		European Association of Young Economists Annual Meeting	King's College
		Scotland and Northern England Conference in Applied Micro	St. Andrews
		QMUL Economics and Finance Workshop	QMUL, London
	<b>2024</b>	Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development	ISI, Delhi
		21 <sup>st</sup> Century India Center Seminar Series	UCSD
		North East Universities Development Consortium	Northeastern
<b>Academic service</b>	Refereeing		Economics of Education Review
	Member, Scientific Committee		Global Empowerment Meeting at Harvard CID, 2025
	Lead organizer		North East Universities Development Consortium, 2023
<b>Research grants</b>	Total funding received as PI or co-PI: \$282,782		
	\$150,000	J-PAL LAI	Leveraging technology and incentives to achieve FLN
	\$56,000	Govt of Odisha	Targeting and take-up of occupation-specific welfare programs
	\$49,655	The Weiss Fund	Job referrals and occupational segregation
	\$16,627	The Weiss Fund	Long-run effects of historical land concentration
	\$4,000	Harvard LMSAI	Job referrals and occupational segregation
	\$2,500	Harvard CID	Long-run effects of historical land concentration
	\$2,500	UCSD 21CIC	Long-run effects of historical land concentration
	\$1,500	Harvard Stone Center	Long-run effects of targeted schooling investments at historically disadvantaged groups