

# Kunal Mangal

Email: [kunal.mangal@apu.edu.in](mailto:kunal.mangal@apu.edu.in) | Website: <https://kmangal.github.io/>

## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Visiting Fellow, Centre for Sustainable Employment at Azim Premji University 2021-  
*Supported by the Weiss Fund Postdoctoral Fellowship*

## EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Public Policy, Harvard University 2021  
*Dissertation: "Essays in the Economics of Public Sector Recruitment in India"*  
*Fields: Labor Economics, Development Economics*

B.A in Economics, Mathematics, and International Studies, University of Arizona 2012  
*Honors: Summa Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa*

## WORKING PAPERS

"How much are government jobs in developing countries worth?" (R&R at the World Bank Economic Review)

Abstract: Government jobs in developing countries are valuable not just because they pay relatively higher wages, but also because they provide many valuable amenities. Does the value of these amenities compete with the nominal wage itself? I use the observed search behavior of candidates preparing for competitive exams for government jobs to infer a lower bound on the total value of a government job, including amenities. Based on a sample of 120 male candidates preparing for civil service exams in Pune, India, I estimate that the amenity value of a government job is at least 81% of total compensation. The high amenity value is not driven by misinformed beliefs about the nominal wage, nor by a high value placed on the process of studying itself. I conclude with a discussion of the implications of these findings for policy and the questions it raises for future research.

"The Long-Run Costs of Highly Competitive Exams for Government Jobs" (Under Review)

Abstract: Public sector recruitment exams can be highly competitive. Does this competition encourage candidates to develop skills that are useful even outside of the public sector, or do the years spent preparing for the exam impose long-run costs on candidates who fail to get selected? To address this question, I study the impact of a partial public sector hiring freeze in the state of Tamil Nadu, India between 2001 and 2006 on male college graduates. The hiring freeze caused the remaining recruitments to become even more competitive. Candidates responded by spending less time employed, most likely in order to invest more time in exam preparation. A decade after the hiring freeze ended, the affected cohorts have lower employment rates, have delayed forming their own households, and appear to have a lower earning capacity. Elder members of the household compensate by delaying retirement. Together, these results suggest that highly competitive exams result in large numbers of unsuccessful candidates making investments that are ultimately unproductive.

## WORK IN PROGRESS

“The Underrepresentation of Women in Competitive Careers: Evidence from the Indian Civil Services” with Niharika Singh

Abstract: Entry into prestigious, high-paying jobs often depends on succeeding in tournaments. These are the same jobs in which women tend to be under-represented. In this paper, we explore the causes of under-representation of women in the Indian civil services, where placement depends on succeeding in a highly competitive examination process. Using a dataset from a large Indian state that covers the universe of applicants and their placement outcomes to state-level civil service jobs between 2012-2016, we uncover where gaps arise in the recruitment process. We show that test re-taking is a key constraint for women: successful placement typically require multiple attempts, but women—particularly those that score well on initial attempts—are less likely to retake the exam than men. The dynamic selection of applicants across exam attempts contributes to a gender gap in placement outcomes. We provide suggestive evidence that the marriage pressure constrains high-ability women from making more attempts.

“The Value of Making Competitive Government Selection Exams More Transparent” with Niharika Singh

Abstract: Why are candidates willing to tolerate such low selection rates in competitive exams for government jobs in India? One possible explanation is that candidates may not have trouble forecasting their likelihood of selection, given the way the exams are designed and implemented. We run an experiment to study how candidate application behavior and study investments might change if the Public Service Commissions were to start releasing more detailed information about the underlying heterogeneity in selection rates.

“The Competition for Government Jobs When Private Sector Labor Market Opportunities Improve”

## PUBLICATIONS

### Policy Reports

Mangal, Kunal (2023). “The Indian Labor Market Through the Lens of Public Sector Recruitment: Insights from the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission to Inform Labor Market Policy and Improve Recruitment Practice.”

Bloesch, Justin, Kunal Mangal, and Niharika Singh. "How Labor Market Tightness and Job Search Activity Changed in the First Year of COVID-19: Evidence from an Indian Job Portal." G2LM|LIC Policy Brief No. 54 (December 2022). [Access data here](#)

### Review of Economics and Statistics 100th Anniversary Article Series

The following articles are non-peer-reviewed pieces written in commemoration of the *Review of Economics and Statistics* 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary:

Khwaja, Asim I., and Kunal Mangal. "Review of Economics and Statistics over the Past 100 Years: A Counting Exercise." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 100, no. 2 (2018a): i-v.

Khwaja, Asim I., and Kunal Mangal. "Review of Economics and Statistics over the Past 100 Years: Authorship." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 100, no. 3 (2018b): i-v.

Khwaja, Asim I., and Kunal Mangal. "Review of Economics and Statistics over the Past 100 Years: Content." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 100, no. 4 (2018c): i-vi.

Khwaja, Asim I., and Kunal Mangal. "Review of Economics and Statistics over the Past 100 Years: Content Explorer." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 101, no. 1 (2019): i-iii.

## **GRANTS**

G2LM LIC Special Call on COVID-19 (\$19,360)	2020
Harvard GSAS Professional Development Grant (\$2,500)	2020
Weiss Fund for Development Economics (\$4,376)	2017
Harvard South Asia Institute Winter Session Grant (\$1,000)	2016

## **PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY**

Presentations: ISI Delhi Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development (2022); PacDev (2022); Canadian Economic Association (2021); Society of Labor Economics (2021); University of Arizona, AREC Department (2020); NEUDC (2020)

Referee Service: Indian Economic Review

## **PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT**

Evidence for Policy Design, Research Fellow	2013-2015
Centre for Microfinance, Research Associate	2012-2013

## **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Citizenship: USA, Overseas Citizen of India (OCI)

Languages: English (native), Hindi (conversational), Spanish (conversational)

*Last Updated: March 2023*