

Patrick Agte

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Placement Director	Gianluca Violante	violante@princeton.edu	609-258-4003
Graduate Administrator	Laura Hedden	lhedden@princeton.edu	609-258-4006

Current Employment

Yale Economic Growth Center	<i>2023-2025</i>
Postdoctoral Associate	

Graduate Studies

Princeton University	<i>2017-2023</i>
PhD in Economics	
Dissertation: <i>“Essays on Preference Formation, Norms Transmission, and Healthcare in Development Economics”</i>	

REFERENCES

Professor Janet Currie Department of Economics Princeton University 609-258-7393 jcurrie@princeton.edu	Professor Thomas Fujiwara Department of Economics Princeton University 609-258-6993 fujiwara@princeton.edu
Professor Rohini Pande Department of Economics Yale University 203-432-3637 rohini.pande@yale.edu	

Prior Education

University of St. Gallen	<i>2012-2016</i>
B.A. in Economics	
Visiting Student, Harvard University, 2015	

Fields

PRIMARY	Development Economics
SECONDARY	Health Economics, Education Economics, Industrial Organization

Job Market Paper

“Fighting Silent Killers: The Equilibrium Effects of India’s Primary Healthcare Expansion.” With Jitendra Kumar Soni.

This paper exploits quasi-experimental variation induced by program rules to study the impact of providing a new mid-level provider (non-physician practitioner) to rural public primary health-care facilities. Two years after the large-scale reform, monthly patient loads at treated public primary healthcare facilities increased by 58% and all-age mortality fell by 10%. Eighty percent of the mortality decline is attributable to a decrease in deaths of individuals aged 56+ years. Survey evidence shows that the reform improved healthcare quality and service availability in the public sector and induced private providers to increase their quality as well. We estimate a structural model of patient demand to quantify the importance of each channel and understand optimal staffing. We find that a counterfactual policy that would only increase public health-care quality would achieve half of the observed decline in mortality. Ten percent of the decrease in mortality can be attributed to improvements in the private sector. Reallocating mid-level providers based on local market conditions would achieve an 18% greater reduction in mortality outcomes.

Working Papers

“Investing in the Next Generation: The Long-Run Impacts of a Liquidity Shock.” With Arielle Bernhardt, Erica Field, Natalia Rigol, and Rohini Pande. *American Economic Review*, Sep 2024, Vol 114 (9): 2792-2824.

Poor entrepreneurs must frequently choose between business investment and children’s education. To examine this trade-off, we exploit experimental variation in short-run microenterprise growth among a sample of Indian households and track schooling and business outcomes over eleven years. Treated households, who experience higher initial microenterprise growth, are on average one-third more likely to send children to college. However, educational investment and schooling gains are concentrated among literate-parent households, whose enterprises eventually stagnate. In contrast, illiterate-parent households experience long-run business gains but declines in children’s education. Our findings suggest that microenterprise growth has the potential to reduce relative intergenerational educational mobility.

“Search and Biased Beliefs in Education Markets.” With Claudia Allende, Adam Kapor, Christopher Neilson, and Fernando Ochoa. *Submitted*.

When learning about schools requires costly search, search decisions depend on families’ beliefs about the returns. This paper asks how families’ (limited) awareness of schools and (inaccurate) beliefs about schools’ prices, quality ratings, and placement chances distort their search efforts and application decisions in the context of Chile’s nationwide centralized school choice process. We combine novel data on search activity with a panel of household surveys, administrative application data, randomized information experiments, and a model of demand for schools. We find that households are unaware of many relevant schools, and hold inaccurate beliefs about admissions chances, prices, and quality scores, affecting their search decisions and application decisions. Most importantly, households’ perceptions systematically overstate the quality ratings of schools that they know and like. Correcting misperceptions about known schools causes

students to match to schools with higher quality, equal to what can be achieved under a full-information benchmark, and closes the quality gap between low-SES and high-SES applicants.

“The Economics of Purity Norms: Caste, Social Interaction, and Women’s Work in India.”
With Arielle Bernhardt.

Caste norms, the religious and social rules that underpin the Hindu caste system, impose strong constraints on behavior: women should stay secluded within the home, caste groups should stay segregated, and certain foods should not be eaten. This paper shows that caste norms are weakened when Hindus live alongside Adivasis, an indigenous minority outside of the caste system. Using a number of estimation strategies, including a historical natural experiment that led to local variation in Adivasi population share, we show that having more Adivasi neighbors decreases Hindus’ adherence to a wide range of caste rules. Hindu women in Adivasi-majority villages are 50% more likely to work and have substantially higher earnings. Individuals higher on the caste hierarchy are less likely to practice “untouchability” towards those lower than them and villages are more likely to be integrated. We argue that Hindus adhere to caste norms as an investment in status within the caste system, and that this investment is less valuable when Adivasis - a lower-status out-group - form a larger share of the village population. Consistent with this explanation, caste norms are weaker in areas where British colonial policy led Adivasis to hold more land and political power, increasing the returns to social and economic interactions with Adivasis independent of their population share.

“The Making of a Public Sector Worker: The Causal Effects of Temporary Work Assignments to Poor Areas.” With Mariel Bedoya.

Can temporary work assignments to poor areas affect worker preferences, beliefs, and career choices? We provide evidence on this question using random variation in the assignment of psychologists within a one-year mandatory rural service program in Peru. Psychologists who completed the program in poorer places are later 15% more likely to work for the public sector and 86% more likely to work in the poorest districts in the country. We provide survey evidence that points to increased prosociality as an important mechanism. Additional findings suggest that the results are not driven by inertia or differences in hireability.

“Research Information and the Last-Mile: Evidence from a Scale-Up Experiment with Secondary Schools in the Dominican Republic.” With Daniel Morales, Christopher Neilson, and Sebastian Otero.

Recent evidence suggests that sharing research information with policymakers can increase the adoption of effective policies. In this paper, we conduct a field experiment to study whether evidence of policy effectiveness can promote compliance among managers responsible for implementing approved policies. We leverage a nationwide mandated scale-up of a new education policy in the Dominican Republic that had been shown to be effective in improving student outcomes in the same context. We find that sharing research information with school officials did not increase implementation rates, and evidence suggests this was not due to inattention or limited understanding.

“Lessons from the Covid Care Centers in West Bengal.” With Abhijit Chowdhury, Jishnu Das, Parthasarathi Mukherjee, and Satyarup Siddhanta, 2022. *Center for Policy Research Working Paper*.

To prepare health systems for future pandemics, a strategy that deserves further attention for the provision of care in rural areas is the use of off-hospital sites for patients who are not severely ill. We discuss one such effort from the state of West Bengal, the lessons from which may be relevant for the management of surge cases for generalized pandemic planning. In March 2021, India experienced a large surge in Covid cases and the spike in patients led to a shortage of hospital beds and oxygen cylinders around the country. Following a notification by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare that allowed organizations to set up care centers for the treatment of Covid-19 patients outside the hospital setting, the Liver Foundation and the Covid Care Network established eight Covid Care Centers in rural West Bengal. These centers were operational between May 2021 and September 2021, which coincided with the post-peak phase of the second Covid-19 wave in India. This article describes the project, summarizes the performance of the centers, and discusses the challenges faced during the project. We conclude that temporary facilities like the Covid Care Centers can be a viable option to provide urgent care during health emergencies.

Work in Progress

“Optimal Teacher Allocations When Identity Matters: Evidence from a Large-Scale Teacher Lottery in India.” With Arielle Bernhardt, S.K. Ritadhi and Rohit Joseph.

“Heterogeneity in Hospital Value Added and Delivery Choices: Evidence from 1.5 Million Births in India.” With Sagar Saxena.

Research Experience

Research Assistant to Prof. Christopher Neilson 2018

Research Assistant to Prof. Rohini Pande 2016 - 2017

Teaching Experience

Princeton University

Junior Independent Work, TA for Prof. Christopher Neilson,

Prof. Hope Corman, Prof. Colleen Carey 2021, 2022

Economic Analysis of Development (Advanced), TA for Prof. Anne Case 2019, 2020, 2021

International Development, TA for Alicia Adsera 2019

Honors, Scholarships, Fellowships, and Grants

J-PAL Cash Transfers for Child Health Initiative / BMGF (\$41,306)	2022
SurveyCTO Data Collection Grant (\$2,000)	2022
J-PAL Gender and Economic Agency Travel Grant (\$9,898)	2020
Weiss Family Grant (\$49,614)	2020
NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (\$31,500)	2020
Princeton Center for Health and Wellbeing Graduate Research Grant (\$9,808)	2019, 2020
Princeton Program in Latin American Studies Travel Grant (\$2,100)	2019, 2022
Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies Travel Grant (\$2,600)	2019, 2022
Princeton Graduate Economics Fellowship	2017–2022
German National Merit Foundation Fellowship	2012–2016

Professional Activities

Presentations

Midwest International Economic Development Conference, German Development Economics Conference, North East Universities Development Consortium Conference, Princeton University, Yale University, Institute of Economic Growth, National Health Systems Resource Centre

Refereeing

American Economic Review: Insights, *Review of Economics of the Household*, *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*

Languages

German (native), English

Last updated: October 2024