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Research interests Development Economics, Labor Economics, Gender

Education	University of California, Santa Cruz, USA	
	PhD in Economics	2025 (expected)
	M.A. in Economics, Department of Economics	2020
	University College London, London, UK	
	MSc Economics	2017
	University of Delhi, Delhi, India	
	B.A. (Honors) Economics	2015

Job Market Paper **“Together to Work? Effect of Travel Buddy on Women’s Job Search and Mobility in India”**, with Smit Gade

In India, many women are willing to work but do not actively seek jobs, partly due to restrictive social norms and widespread harassment that severely limit their mobility. To navigate these challenges, women rely on group travel and can often only travel with relatives or other women. This paper studies the impact of women’s inability to travel alone on their job search using a clustered RCT. We evaluated an intervention that involved organizing women from the same neighborhoods into groups and inviting them to participate in job interviews held at the partner factory on the same dates. Our results show that this treatment increases interview participation by 80-90% compared to inviting women to interviews individually or on different dates. The treatment also improved women’s job search beyond the experiment: women were 75% more likely to look for jobs and made twice as many job search trips. We show that women have a preference to travel with companions but are constrained in their ability to do so effectively. However, connecting them with other women living nearby can help overcome the barriers to traveling together and thus, seeking jobs.

Published and Working Papers **“Going the Extra Mile: Farm Subsidies and Spatial Convergence in Agricultural Input Adoption”**, with Shilpa Aggarwal, Dahyeon Jeong, Naresh Kumar, David Sungho Park, Jonathan Robinson, and Alan Spearot, Reject and Resubmit, *Economic Journal*

Many countries subsidize agricultural inputs but require farmers to travel to retailers to access them, just as for normal purchases. What effect do travel costs have on subsidy take-up and input usage, particularly for remote farmers? We analyze Malawi’s Farm Input Subsidy Program (FISP), and show that though retail prices are close to uniform, travel-cost-adjusted prices are substantially higher in remote areas due to travel costs. Nevertheless, subsidy redemption is nearly universal and only modestly lower in remote areas, suggesting that these travel costs are not enough to dissuade redemption. We make

use of a policy change in the 2017-18 to 2019-20 agricultural seasons which took centralized control of beneficiary selection and find that FISP substantially mitigates the sizeable remoteness gradient that exists for non-beneficiaries. Our results demonstrate that subsidy programs may narrow spatial inequities.

“God is in the Rain: The Impact of Rainfall-Induced Early Social Distancing on COVID-19 Outbreaks”, with Ajay Shenoy, Bhavyaa Sharma, Guanghong Xu, Haedong Rho, and Kinpritma Sangha, *Journal of Health Economics*, 2022

We measure the benefit to society created by preventing COVID-19 deaths through a marginal increase in early social distancing. We exploit county-level rainfall on the last weekend before statewide lockdown in the early phase of the pandemic. After controlling for historical rainfall, temperature, and state fixed-effects, current rainfall is a plausibly exogenous instrument for social distancing. A one percent decrease in the population leaving home on the weekend before lockdown creates an average of 132 dollars of benefit per county resident within 2 weeks. The impacts of earlier distancing compound over time and mainly arise from lowering the risk of a major outbreak, yielding large but unevenly distributed social benefit.

Works in Progress **“Enhancing Women’s Employment Outcomes: Mitigating Travel Cost and Information Barriers in Employer-Provided Creches”**, with Smit Gade, Anant Nyshadham, and Achyuta Adhvaryu

Enabling women to engage in paid work and access stable employment is a critical global policy challenge. Research indicates that access to childcare facilities can increase women’s employment, yet uptake of such services remains low. Qualitative evidence suggests that high costs, transportation expenses when traveling with children, and concerns about the quality of childcare centers are the primary constraints that limit their utilization. We conduct a large-scale RCT with 1200 women in India in partnership with a large apparel manufacturing firm to address these constraints. We investigate whether subsidizing travel costs and providing quality information about the firm’s on-site free creche facilities improves women’s utilization of the facilities. We also investigate the second-stage effects on women’s labor market outcomes and children’s welfare.

“Understanding Gendered Differences in Job Search Behavior: Evidence from Urban India ”, with Monica Shandal and David Sungho Park

Existing literature and our initial descriptive work shows that there exists gendered differences in job search behavior. Men typically search for longer and take more time finding a desirable job whereas a majority of women report never finding a desirable job. 65% of women report not knowing where to find look for job openings compared to 35% of men. In this paper, we use a combination of lab-in-the-field experiments and randomly vary job search costs to examine different mechanisms that can help explain the differences in job search behavior between men and women. We test whether women exhibit pessimistic beliefs about wage distribution, have lower reservation wages, experience lower wage distribution, high travel costs or face informational constraints through a field experiment in India.

“The Girl on the Train: Effect of Delhi Metro Transit System on Women’s Employment”, with Moumita Das

Research suggests that restrictions on women’s physical mobility, associated with stigma and safety, can affect women’s decision to participate in the labor force and reduce access to a large proportion of jobs in many developing countries. This paper investigates the role of public urban rail transit, specifically the Delhi Metro Transit System, in improving employment outcomes for women in Delhi, India by addressing some mobility concerns. Our empirical approach uses an event study design to explore spatial and temporal variation in access to Delhi Metro stations, which opened between 2002-2011. Utilizing Economic Census data from 1990-2013, we find that the establishments in areas with access to the Delhi Metro employ 10 to 12.2 percentage points more paid female workers per paid male worker. The effect is immediate and sustained after the introduction of the Metro. Preliminary results indicate that the Metro influenced the composition of establishments in the area, leading to a higher proportion of female-friendly establishments that hire more women.

Research Grants	UCSC Economics Department Research Grant with David Sungho Park, and Monica Shandal, \$5100	2024
	UCSC Center for Labor and Community Research Grant, \$7,267.47	2024
	Weiss Fund for Research in Development Economics with Monica Shandal, \$14,901	2024
	SurveyCTO Data Collection Research Grant, \$3376	2024
	G2LM LIC Programme SRG (Phase VII), €24,969	2023
	UCSC Economics Department Research Grant, \$5000	2023
	UCSC Blum Scholars Grant, \$4000	2023
	Weiss Fund for Research in Development Economics, \$35,010	Spring 2023
	J-PAL GEA Initiative Travel/Proposal Development Grant, \$8040	2022
Fellowships, and Awards	UCSC Economics Department Research Grant, \$5000	2022
	UCSC Chancellor’s Quarter Dissertation Fellowship, \$10,000	2025
	UCSC Teaching Assistant Award for Excellence in Teaching	2024
	UCSC Graduate Summer Writing Fellowship, \$6000	2023
	UCSC Teaching Assistant Award for Excellence in Teaching	2023
	UCSC Eileen Brooks Memorial Research Paper Award, \$2,200	2021
	UCSC Regents’ Fellowship, \$15,000	2019
Research Assistantship	Jonathan Robinson (UCSC), Shilpa Aggarwal (ISB), and Alan Spearot (UCSC)	2020 – 2022
	Ajay Shenoy (UCSC)	2021
	Supreet Kaur (UC, Berkeley), Heather Scholfield (Wharton), and Christina Brown (Chicago)	2017-2019
Presentations	Good Business Forum, UC San Diego	2024
	All California Labor Economics Conference	2024
	UCSC Brown Bag Seminar	2024

UCSC Micro Workshop 2021-2024

Teaching Experience	ECON 1: Introductory Microeconomics	Spring 2021
	ECON 100A: Intermediate Microeconomics	Spring, Summer, Fall 2020
	ECON 100B: Intermediate Macroeconomics	Spring 2022
	ECON 120: Development Economics	Fall 2021
	ECON 139A: Economics of Ecommerce	Winter 2022
	ECON 113: Introductory Econometrics	Fall 2022
	ECON 217: Applied Econometric Analysis II	Winter 2023

Skills Computer: STATA, QGIS, Python, R, MATLAB, ODK, SurveyCTO, \LaTeX
Language: English (fluent), Hindi (native), Punjabi (basic)

References

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Professor Alan Spearot University of California, Santa Cruz Economics Department Email: aspearot@ucsc.edu	