Vatsal Khandelwal

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Education

- (2021) **Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) in Economics,** University of Oxford.
  Supervisors: Prof. Stefan Dercon, Prof. Alexander Teytelboym.
- (2017) **MSc in Economics for Development**, University of Oxford.
  Awarded distinction. Awarded the Luca D'Agliano Prize for the Best Dissertation and George Webb Medley Prize, proxime accessit (runner up) for Best Overall Performance.
- (2015) **Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Economics,** St. Xavier's College, Mumbai.
  Awarded distinction. Pronounced batch Valedictorian (Arts) for the highest CGPA.

Visiting Positions

- **Visting Scholar,** King Center on Global Development, Stanford University. *Summer, 2023*
- **Visiting Fellow**, Harvard University. *Spring Term, 2021*

References

Prof. Stefan Dercon,
Department of Economics,
University of Oxford.
stefan.dercon@economics.ox.ac.uk

Prof. Alexander Teytelboym,
Department of Economics,
University of Oxford.
alexander.teytelboym@economics.ox.ac.uk

Prof. Simon Quinn,
Department of Economics & Public Policy, Imperial College Business School.
simon.quinn@imperial.ac.uk

Prof. Marcel Fafchamps,
Freeman Spogli Institute,
Stanford University.
fafchamp@stanford.edu

Research

Job Market Paper: "Silent Networks: The Role of Inaccurate Beliefs in Reducing Useful Social Interactions" (with Ronak Jain) Draft available here.

Inaccurate beliefs about social norms can reduce useful social interactions and adversely affect an individual's ability to deal with negative shocks. We run a randomised controlled trial with low-income workers in urban India who lack access to formal financial and healthcare support. We find that the majority of individuals underestimate their community's willingness to engage in dialogue around financial and mental health concerns. Belief correction leads to a large increase in the demand for network-based assistance. Additional survey experiments show that the effects are primarily driven by a reduction in the perceived costs of violating social norms. Implementation of a hypothetical choice experiment allows us to identify whether these costs are driven by concerns around signalling, reputation, or insensitivity. Then, we structurally estimate a network diffusion model to benchmark the predicted long-run effects of our intervention against counterfactual interventions. We predict that the large effects on engagement will not translate into a shift in equilibrium. We compute the strength of counterfactual interventions needed to sustain these effects and find that belief correction can be used to generate both the demand and funding for these policies.

Publications

"Learning in Networks with Idiosyncratic Agents." (*Accepted, Games and Economic Behaviour*) Draft available here.

Working Papers

- "Great Expectations: Experimental Evidence from Schools in Pakistan" (with Ronak Jain and Minahil Asim). Working Paper available here.
- "Can Network Ties Help Facilitate Female Entrepreneurship?" (with Juni Singh). Working Paper Available Upon Request.
- "Spatial Inequality and Informality in Kenya's Firm Network" (with Verena Wiedemann, Peter Wankuru Chacha, and Benard Kipyegon Kirui). Working Paper available here.

Work in Progress

- "Impact of a Government-led Mental Health Intervention on Teaching Practices and Student Outcomes" (with Preetham Rodrigues) *Fieldwork Ongoing.*
- "Network Dynamics of Temporary Migration". Previously titled "'Social Networks, Risk Sharing and Circular Migration: Evidence from Rural India."

Research Grants

- (2022) CSAE Top up Research Grant (£6,440) for "Silent Networks: The Role of Inaccurate Beliefs in Reducing Useful Social Interactions" with Ronak Jain.
- (2020) JPAL Post Primary Education Grant ($20,548) for "Pygmalion Effect and Education Networks: Evidence from Schools in Pakistan" with Ronak Jain and Minahil Asim.
- (2019) Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE) Grant ($40,000) for "Pygmalion Effect and Education Networks: Evidence from Schools in Pakistan" with Ronak Jain and Minahil Asim.
- (2019) Centre for the Study of African Economies Research Grant (£4,030) for "Silent Networks: The Role of Inaccurate Beliefs in Reducing Useful Social Interactions" with Ronak Jain. Previously titled "Misperceptions about Interpersonal Dialogue in Social Networks".

Scholarships and Prizes

- (2020) Final Year Doctoral Bursary, Department of Economics, University of Oxford.
- (2018) Two Year Doctoral Bursary, Department of Economics, University of Oxford.
- (2017) Hicks Scholarship in Economics, Linacre College, University of Oxford.
- (2017) Luca D'Agliano Prize for the Best Dissertation in the MSc in Economics for Development, University of Oxford. Awarded for the paper "Social Networks, Risk Sharing and Circular Migration: Evidence from Rural India".
- (2017) George Webb Medley Prize, proxime accessit (runner up) for Best Overall Performance in the MSc in Economics for Development, University of Oxford.
- (2016) Queen Elizabeth House Departmental Scholarship (covering all fees and living costs for the MSc in Economics for Development). Awarded by the Scholarships Committee for the Oxford Department of International Development and Corpus Christi College.

- (2015) Dr. Edgar DaSilva Memorial Prize and Mr. Badi C Tyabjee, J.J & B.J Lalwani, and Billoo scholarship for highest aggregate in B.A. examinations, St. Xavier's College, Mumbai.
- (2015) Vinod Mehra Scholarship for the Best Cultural Talent, St. Xavier's College, Mumbai.
- (2014) Fredie A. Mehta Scholarship for highest marks in Economics in First and Second Year and continuing with Economics in the Third Year at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai.
- (2012) Certificate Of Merit by the Central Board of Secondary Education "for reasons of outstanding academic performance and for being among the top 0.1% of successful candidates" of the All India Senior School Certificate Examinations in Mathematics.

Teaching Experience

Graduate Teaching

- (2023-24) Course Convener for Microeconomic Theory, MSc in Economics for Development, University of Oxford. I will teach topics in game theory including discrete and continuous games, hidden action, signalling, and auctions.
- (2022-23) Course Convener for "Applications of Behavioural Economics to the Developing World", MSc in Economics for Development, University of Oxford.
- (2020-21) Department of Economics Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Oxford. Taught classes in Microeconomics to first year Economics MPhil students.
- (2018) Assisted Dr. Natalie Quinn in revising and delivering the pre-sessional math course for the MSc in Economics for Development at the University of Oxford.

Undergraduate Teaching

- (2019-20) Department of Economics Graduate Teaching Assistant at Pembroke College, Oxford. Taught Core Microeconomics, Microeconomic Analysis, and Quantitative Economics.
- (2018-19) Department of Economics Graduate Teaching Assistant at Pembroke College, Oxford. Taught Microeconomic Analysis, Game Theory, and Quantitative Economics.

Research Experience

- (2019- 20) Research Assistant at the Department of Economics (from *Aug 2019* to *June 2020*) and then at the Department of International Development (from *July 2020* to *Sept 2020*), University of Oxford. Assisted Dr. Rossa O'Keeffe-O'Donovan on a project that intends to model and evaluate the spatial spillover effects of cash transfers.
- (2018-19) Research Assistant in Development Economics at the Blavatnik School of Government. Assisted Dr. Mahreen Mahmud on a project that studies the impact of cash transfers and a psychological intervention on the outcomes of women in Kenya.
- (2015-16) Research Consultant at the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) on the Bus Drivers Training Project. Involved with designing questionnaires, managing survey teams, cleaning and analyzing data, and coordinating with local partners.

Miscellaneous

- **Other Roles/Affiliations:**
  - (2020-2021) Managed CSAE's Coders' Corner – a repository of advice around coding.
  - (2023-)Team Member of Lab^2 — a metascience lab for experimentation in science.
- **Softwares skills:** Matlab, Stata, Mathematica, Gephi, LaTeX, Qualtrics.