

Nishtha Sharma

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Education

Ph.D. in Economics, University of California, Irvine	2022
Master of Economics, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi	2014
Bachelor of Economics (Honors), University of Delhi	2011

Research Fields

Behavioral and Experimental Economics, Labor Economics, Applied Microeconomic theory, Political Economy

Work Experience

Postdoctoral Research Associate, Social Science Division, New York University, Abu Dhabi	<i>At Present</i>
Ph.D. Intern, Fund Internship Program (FIP), Strategy, Policy and Review Department, International Monetary Fund	2021

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant, Department of Economics, UC Irvine	
Graduate level: Microeconomic Theory 1	<i>Fall 2018, 2019</i>
Microeconomic Theory 2 (Game theory)	<i>Winter 2019, 2020</i>
Undergraduate level: Intermediate Microeconomics (Virtual)	<i>Spring, 2020</i>
Probability Theory.	<i>Fall 2016, Spring 2018, Spring 2019</i>
Managerial Economics	<i>Winter 2018</i>
Economics of Strategy	<i>Fall 2017</i>
Basic Macroeconomics	<i>Spring 2017</i>
Basic Microeconomics	<i>Winter 2017</i>
Assistant Professor, Indian School of Business and Finance, London School of Economics and Political Science - International Center, New Delhi, India	
Introduction to Economics (Undergraduate Microeconomics and Macroeconomics)	<i>2015-16</i>

Working Papers

“The Persistence of Discrimination: Theory and Experimental evidence”

Why does discrimination persist when evidence suggests that disadvantaged people can overcome it? I model dynamic discrimination as a two-period two-player contest such that the second period discrimination is lower or reversed if the disadvantaged candidate wins in the first period. The possibility of discrimination reduction or reversal threatens the advantaged player and encourages the disadvantaged player. My model predicts that the advantaged player's threat of losing the advantage is more salient than the disadvantaged candidate's opportunity to overcome discrimination. Experimental data confirms that the possibility of overcoming discrimination generally causes the advantaged candidate to increase their effort to prevent loss of advantage significantly more than the disadvantaged candidate to overcome disadvantage. Consequently, the advantaged player's equilibrium probability of winning is even higher when discrimination can be overcome than when it cannot change. Advantaged people's resistance to change causes discrimination to persist even in dynamic economic environments.

“A Signalling Story of Street Charity: Evidence from India” (Joint with Samreen Malik)

Won the Econometric Society's Best Paper Award in Applied Economics 2022

This paper examines the effect of offering a product on charitable behavior toward beggars on urban streets using a combination of theory and survey evidence. We propose a signaling model, which suggests that gives form beliefs about the intrinsic cost of working and willingness to earn based on the choice of begging with or without a product. In a separating equilibrium, the act of begging with a product separates the deserving from the undeserving and predicts higher charitable transfers to beggars with products. We use survey data collected in Delhi to find that the charitable transfers towards beggars with products are higher than towards beggars without products, even when givers did not take the product, indicating that the presence of a product does increase donations.

“Which gendered laws matter for women's economic empowerment?” (Joint with Anna Fruttero, Diego Gomes)

Conference and Workshop Presentations

Association for Study of Religion Economics and Culture Graduate Student Conference	2021
Ahmedabad University's 2nd Annual Economics Conference	2021
Winter School, Delhi School of Economics & The Econometric Society	2020
Behavioral Research in Economics Workshop, IIM-A & IIM-B	2020
Southern Economic Association Conference	2020
Economic Science Association Global Virtual Conference	2020
Contests: Theory and Evidence Conference Conference	2019, 2020
Workshop on India's Women, Work, and Development, Evidence for Policy and Design, Indian Statistical Institute	2019
Institute for Mathematics and Behavioral Science Graduate Student Workshop	2019
Women in Economics Spring Workshop, UC Irvine	2019
Graduate Student Workshop by the Association for the Study of Religion, Economics and Culture	2019

Research Grants & Fellowships

Experimental Social Science Laboratory Research Grant, UC Irvine (\$2400)	2021
Social Sciences Graduate Students Fellowship, UC Irvine (\$12500)	2021-2022
Graduate Division Completion Fellowship, UC Irvine (\$7500)	2021-2022
Non-Resident Supplemental Tuition Grant, UC Irvine (\$5000)	2022
Associate Dean's Dissertation Fellowship, UC Irvine (\$7500)	2020
Kugelman Citizen Peace-building Fellowship, UC Irvine (\$3000)	2020 - 2021
Center for Global Peace and Conflict Studies Research Grant, UC Irvine (\$2800)	2020
Initiatives to End Family Violence Research Grant, UC Irvine (\$1000)	2019
Department of Economics Summer Research Fellowship, UC Irvine (\$8600)	2018-2021
Center for Global Peace and Conflict Studies Travel Grant, UC Irvine (\$2000)	2019
Department of Economics Travel Grant, UC Irvine (\$500)	2019

Service and Leadership

Referee for Experimental Economics, Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, Journal of Economic Dynamics and Control	
Organizer of the Theory, History, and Political Economy Workshop at UC Irvine	2020
Graduate student mentor, UC Irvine	2019

Software Skills

Proficient in Python, STATA, oTree, LaTeX and MS Office