ASHNA ARORA

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Education:

2018 (expected)	Ph.D.	Economics	Columbia University
2012	M.Sc.	Quantitative Economics	Indian Statistical Institute
2010	B.A.	Economics	Delhi University

Affiliations:

2017-Present   Fellow, Center for Development Economics and Policy

Honors and Awards:

2017   Dissertation Fellowship, Columbia University
2017   Wueller Teaching Award, Department of Economics, Columbia University
For the best Principles of Economics teaching assistant (runner up)
2017   HCEO SSSI Travel Grant, University of Chicago
2016   Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Travel Grant, Columbia University
2015   Wueller Pre-Dissertation Award, Department of Economics, Columbia University
For the best dissertation proposal by a 4th year student
2015   Center for Development Economics and Policy Student Grant
2015-17   Applied Microeconomics, Applied Microeconomic Theory and Development Colloquia Grants, Columbia University
2013-17   Faculty Fellowship, Department of Economics, Columbia University
2012-13   Dean's Fellowship, Columbia University
2010-12   Fellowship of the Indian Statistical Institute

Fields of Specialization: Labor Economics, Development Economics

Job Market Paper: "Juvenile Crime and Anticipated Punishment"

Abstract: Recent research suggests that the threat of harsh sanctions does not deter juvenile crime. This is based on the finding that criminal behavior reduces only marginally as individuals cross the age of criminal majority, the age at which they are transferred from the juvenile to the more punitive adult criminal justice system. Using a model of criminal capital accumulation, I show theoretically that these small reactions close to the age threshold mask sizable reactions away from, or in anticipation of, the age threshold. The key prediction of this framework is that when the age of criminal majority is raised from seventeen to eighteen, all individuals under eighteen will increase criminal activity, not just seventeen year olds. I exploit recent changes to the age of criminal majority in the United States to show evidence consistent with this prediction - arrests of 13-16 year olds rise significantly for offenses associated with street gangs, including homicide, robbery, theft, burglary and vandalism offenses. Consistent with previous work, I find that arrests of 17 year olds do not rise systematically in response. I provide suggestive evidence that this null effect may be due to a simultaneous increase in under-reporting of crime by 17 year olds. Last, I use a back-of-the-envelope calculation to show that for every seventeen year old that was diverted from adult punishment, jurisdictions bore social costs of over $65,000 due to the increase in juvenile offending.

Working Papers:

"Elections by Consensus: Effects on Politician Identity and Government Size"

Abstract: This paper examines the effects of infusing elements of community consensus into local electoral processes. Identification comes from a unique policy experiment in rural India that incentivizes village residents to reach a consensus on who their political representatives should be, eliminating the need for the state government to organize official elections. Leveraging variation in these incentives, I document a decrease in the number of candidates running for political office, in line with the program's primary goal of holding fewer elections. Elected candidates are younger and more educated, but exert a negative influence on government size, measured by the collection of tax revenue, government expenditure and employment creation. These results may be explained by the fact that politicians that rely on the support of local elites (who have a greater say in elections based on community consensus) are not incentivized to appease village residents in order to get re-elected.

"Representation and Opportunism: RD Evidence from Indian Village Councils"
with Rakesh Banerjee, Kunjal Desai and Siddharth Hari

Abstract: Local governments in developing countries play a crucial role in the provision of local public goods and the functioning of social welfare programs. This paper investigates

the relationship between the size of elected local government councils and public service delivery. We use a natural experiment from India, where the number of politicians at the village level is an increasing, discontinuous function of village population. We set up a regression discontinuity design to study the impact of a larger elected council on the targeting of welfare schemes as well as the allocation of private benefits by politicians to themselves. We find that larger councils improve access to a large-scale workfare program, especially for traditionally disadvantaged communities. We also find that increasing the number of council members increases appropriation of private benefits by the council head but not by ordinary members.

Work-in-Progress:
 "Bias Pass-Through in Criminal Justice: The Role of Prosecutors and Judges"

 "The Career Impact of First Jobs: Evidence and Labor Market Design Lessons from Randomized Choice Sets" with Jonas Hjort

 "Student Retention, Learning and Labor Market Outcomes" with Nazmul Ahsan, Rakesh Banerjee and Siddharth Hari

Presentations:

2017: Young Economists Symposium (Yale), HCEO Summer School on Socioeconomic Inequality (UChicago)
2016: Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development (Indian Statistical Institute)

Research Assistantships:

Christopher Blattman, Columbia University, 2014
Indira Rajaraman, Central Board of the Reserve Bank of India, 2013
Vegard Iversen, Indian Statistical Institute, University of East Anglia, 2010

Teaching Assistantships:

Principles of Economics, Sunil Gulati, 2013-14, 2016
Mathematics for Economists (Masters Level), Muhammad Asali, 2014
Principles of Economics, Cattarina Musatti, 2014
Intermediate Microeconomics, Pietro Ortoleva, 2015
Intermediate Macroeconomics (Masters Level), Francisco Rivera-Batiz, 2015
Intermediate Macroeconomics, Jasmina Arifovic, 2015
Intermediate Microeconomics (Masters Level), Muhammad Asali, 2016-17

References:

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