

Gursmeep (Rubina) Hundal

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RESEARCH FIELDS	Primary: Development Economics Secondary: Behavioral Economics; Labor Economics; Education		
ACADEMIC POSITIONS	McMaster University		
	Assistant Professor, Department of Economics		2026 – present
	Assistant Professor, Wilson College of Leadership and Civic Engagement		2026 – present
EDUCATION	University of Chicago		2026
	PhD in Public Policy		
	Carnegie Mellon University		2018
	MS in Public Policy and Management; Data Analytics Track (<i>Distinction</i>)		
	NMIMS University Mumbai, India		2014
	Bachelor of Technology and MBA (<i>Summa cum laude</i>)		
WORKING PAPERS	Discrimination on a Mutable Trait: Labor-Market Penalties for Oral Appearance I study how a visible but remediable marker of poverty, dental appearance, affects hiring in urban India. A randomized headshot experiment and an incentivized resume-rating study with hiring professionals show that poor oral health lowers perceived confidence, predicted wages, and hire scores, especially in customer-facing roles. Effects attenuate once I control for employers' forecasts of customer and coworker reactions, pointing to anticipated third-party discrimination. Findings suggest health and appearance interventions as an underused lever for labor-market mobility.		
	Learning About Work: Evidence from a Randomized Internship Program in Urban India (with Emma Zhang) We evaluate a randomized internship program offering 80-hour placements to low-income high-school students in urban India, testing whether brief labor-market exposure updates beliefs about employment and returns to education. Interns value career information 7–8% more than controls and revise expected earnings and job-search durations, with larger updates among girls. Aspirations remain high in both groups, but treated students form more realistic expectations about the school-to-work transition.		
	Language of Violence: Persistence of Origin-Based Social Norms Among Migrant Couples (with Naira Kalra and Oyebola Okunogbe). We examine how social norms from place of origin shape intimate partner violence (IPV) among migrant couples in India, linking historical IPV rates in origin regions to current experiences of migrant wives. A one percentage point increase in origin IPV predicts a 0.4 percentage point rise in current IPV, driven by intergenerational beliefs, particularly wives' acceptance of wife-beating formed through parental exposure. Results show that origin-based cultural norms persist across migration despite new social and institutional environments.		

WORK IN PROGRESS

Sibling Socialization and the Formation of Labor Force Norms in India (with Emma Zhang).

We study how sibling gender composition shapes labor market aspirations and job application behavior among low-income youth in India. Using public school alumni data, we find girls with older sisters are more likely to apply for jobs, while those with older brothers apply less, patterns that persist after controlling for parental expectations and socioeconomic background. Same-sex siblings appear to act as role models, while opposite-sex siblings reinforce traditional norms. A follow-up randomized trial with 5,000 students tests whether structured information and social-learning interventions can recalibrate these norms within households.

Saving with Stocks: Should We Promote Opportunities for Gains or Assuage Worries Around Loss? (with Emma Zhang).

We study how framing and gender interact in financial risk-taking in the US. Two experiments, one on preferences over gains and losses under ambiguity, another randomizing a group-chat intervention, show that men and women differ not in preferences over gains but in loss aversion. Traders are more sensitive to gains than non-traders, while loss-avoidance messaging increases willingness to invest among new investors. A follow-up study tests whether “loss reassurance” or “gain celebration” framings better promote stock market participation.

Aspirations and Inaction Among High-School Students in India (with Rajdev Brar).

At the end of Grade 10, students in India choose a junior college and academic stream, a decision that shapes long-run career trajectories, yet many approach it with limited knowledge of admissions requirements and pathways. We implement a large-scale RCT across 200 government schools testing whether encouraging active information search, rather than direct information provision, improves students’ understanding of educational options, aligns selected streams with aspirations, and enhances the quality of academic decisions.

PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT

Visa Vows: Migration, Marriage, and Cultural Remittances in India (with Mridul Joshi).

This project investigates how female-led educational migration from Punjab to Canada reshapes norms in marriage markets. We introduce the concept of *cultural remittances* as the transmission of ideas and status signals from migrants to non-migrants, and test whether migration substitutes for or amplifies traditional identity markers such as caste, skin tone, and dowry. Two experiments, a lab-in-the-field partner choice task in IELTS coaching centers and an online audit of matrimonial platforms, randomize migration and dowry cues in AI-generated profiles. The results will illuminate how cross-border mobility alters assortative matching and the behavioral foundations of gender and social hierarchies.

Does entrepreneurship curriculum create firm growth or perpetuate microenterprises? (with Emma Zhang).

We study whether school-based entrepreneurship curricula expand firm employment or mainly reproduce small self-employment. In India, we partner with local firms and public schools offering vocational coursework alongside regular academics. We randomize whether firms see vocational credentials when evaluating student applicants and track subsequent labor-market entry. The design identifies whether such curricula raise wage-job access or instead steer youth toward low-scale microenterprises.

RESEARCH GRANTS (As PI/Co-PI)	George E Richmond Foundation	2024
	The Agency Fund	2024
	The Scandinavian Consortium for Organizational Research	2023
	Weiss Fund for Research in Development Economics	2022
	Fama Miller Center for Research in Finance	2022
	Mansueto Institute Urban Doctoral Fellowship and Grant	2022
	Committee on Southern Asian Studies, UChicago	2022, 2023, 2024, 2025
	Development Economics Research Fund	2022, 2023
	Becker Friedman Institute for Economics	2021, 2022, 2023
AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS	Committee on Education Fellowship, University of Chicago	2025
	PhD Advance Internship Fellowship, University of Chicago	2024
	Centre for Applied AI Machine Learning Institute	2022
	Carnegie Mellon University Academic Scholarship	2016–2018
	J. N. Tata Scholarship	2016
	ETS TOEFL Scholarship	2016
	One Young World Ambassador, Digital Development panelist	2015
	Dean's Merit Award, NMIMS University	2014
	NMIMS Student Ambassador Award	2014
RESEARCH EXPERIENCE	Resolution Project Fellowship and Venture Grant	2013
	World Bank Group , Washington, DC	2018 – 2023
	Consultant, Development Research Group, and Development Impact Evaluation (DIME)	
	Carnegie Mellon University , Pittsburgh, PA	2016 – 2018
	Research Assistant to Prof. Alfred Blumstein	
	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) , Pittsburgh, PA	2017 – 2018
	Capstone Project Manager under Prof. Jonathan Caulkins	
TEACHING EXPERIENCE	University of Chicago	
	Instructor, Math Camp for incoming graduate students	2024
	Instructor, Mathematical Methods	2022, 2023
	Preceptor, Undergraduate Thesis Advising	2023
	Head TA, Math Camp	2022, 2023
	TA, How to Change the World (Prof. Chris Blattman)	2024
	TA, Crony Capitalism (Prof. Luigi Zingales)	2024
	TA, Behavioral Experiments (Dr. Mareike Schomerus)	2023
	TA, Behavioral Science and Policy (Prof. Kim Wolske)	2022, 2023
	TA, Cost Benefit Analysis (Prof. Robert Kaestner)	2022
	TA, Public Policy Analysis (Prof. Jim Leitzel)	2022
	Carnegie Mellon University	
	TA, International Development (Prof. Silvia Borzutsky)	2018
	TA, Research Writing (Prof. Kim Hyatt)	2016, 2017

PRESENTATIONS	The Society of Labor Economists Annual Meeting	2026
	University of Toronto	2026
	Pacific Conference for Development Economics (PacDev) at UC San Diego	2026
	Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP) Annual Conference	2026
	McMaster University	2026
	Carnegie Mellon University	2026
	University of Chicago	2026
	Midwest Economics of Education Conference at Notre Dame	2025
	Advances with Field Experiments Conference	2025
	Association for Education Finance and Policy, EdDev	2025
	Eastern Economic Association, New York	2023
	BIG Difference Conference, University of British Columbia	2021
	UNLEASH Innovation Lab, Shenzhen, China	2019
	Innovation with Impact, Carnegie Mellon University	2018
	National Center for Juvenile Justice, Pittsburgh, PA	2018
PRE PHD RESEARCH	Quantitative Analysis of the Social Costs of Road Traffic Crashes Literature. Bougna, T., Hundal, G., & Taniform, P. (2022). <i>Accident Analysis & Prevention</i> , 165, 106282.	
	Analysis of Intergenerational Income Mobility for Counties Within the United States Using Machine Learning. Tso, A., Hundal, G., & Mei, V. (2017). <i>The Heinz Journal</i> , 15(2).	
	Long View of Recidivism: Exploring the Long-Term Recidivism Patterns Among First-Time Arrestees and Prison Releasees. Nakamura, K., Blumstein, A., & Hundal, G. <i>Working Paper</i> .	
PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES	Graduate Student Union Steward, University of Chicago	2024
	Mentor, Women in Economics, University of Chicago	2022
	Highland Ambassador, Carnegie Mellon University	2018
	President, International Development Group, Carnegie Mellon University	2018
REFEREING	<i>American Educational Research Journal</i> .	
INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE	United Nations Development Programme , New York, NY Programme Associate Intern	2017
	Barclays , Mumbai, India Senior Investment Banking Analyst	2014 – 2016
	Project Reach Foundation , Mumbai, India Co-Founder, nonprofit (undergraduate)	2013 – 2016
	Siemens Financial Services , Mumbai, India Management Trainee	2013
	Edelweiss Securities Limited , Mumbai, India Intern	2012
LANGUAGES	English, Hindi, Panjabi	