

# Neeraja Gupta

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## Education

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics, University of Pittsburgh, expected 2023  
M.A. in Economics, University of Pittsburgh, 2018  
M.A. in Economics, Delhi School of Economics, 2014  
B.A. (hons.) in Economics, Shri Ram College of Commerce, 2012

## Research Interests

Behavioral Economics; Experimental Economics; Gender Economics; and Labor Economics

## Working Papers

[Can Temporary Affirmative Action Improve Representation?](#) (*Job Market Paper*)  
[The Experimenters' Dilemma: Inferential Preferences Over Populations](#) (Joint with L. Rigotti and A. Wilson)  
[Well Excuse Me! Replicating and Connecting Excuse-Seeking Behaviors](#) (Joint with B. Ahumada, Y. Chen, K. Hyde, M. Lepper, W. Mathews, N. Silveus, L. Vesterlund, T. Weidman, A. Wilson, K. P. Winichakul and L. Zhou)

## Technical Report

[Going Virtual: A Step-by-Step Guide to Taking the In-Person Experimental Lab Online](#) (Joint with D. Danz, M. Lepper, L. Vesterlund and K. P. Winichakul)

## Selected Works in Progress

On Gender Differences in Responsiveness to the Experimental Conditions (Joint with F. A. Araujo and L. Vesterlund)  
The Use of Irrelevant Information to Discriminate in Hiring (Joint with B. Ahumada, M. Avery and K. Hyde)  
Affirmative Action or Under-confidence: Which Came First? (Joint with M. Avery)

## Relevant Positions Held

Research Assistant at Pittsburgh Experimental Economics Laboratory, 2020-21  
Research Assistant to Prof. Lise Vesterlund, 2018-19  
Lecturer, Shri Ram College of Commerce, Spring 2016  
Research Assistant to Prof. Ashwini Deshpande, 2015-16  
Research Assistant at World Bank Group, Social Observatory Unit, 2014-16

## Teaching Experience

Instructor, University of Pittsburgh

Teaching Economics (co-instructor with Prof. Daniele Coen-Pirani), Fall 2020

Introduction to Microeconomic Theory, Summer 2020

Game Theory Principles, Summer 2019

Instructor, Shri Ram College of Commerce

Indian Economic Development, Spring 2016

Teaching Assistant, University of Pittsburgh

Introduction to International Economics, Fall 2022

Introduction to Microeconomic Theory, Summer 2021

Mathematical Methods for Economic Analysis (Graduate), Fall 2017

Introduction to Econometrics, Spring 2018

## Awards, Fellowships and Grants

Arts and Sciences Graduate Fellowship, University of Pittsburgh, Fall 2021

Tamara Horowitz Memorial Fund Award, University of Pittsburgh, 2021

Elizabeth Baranger Teaching Award, University of Pittsburgh, 2020

Social Science Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship, University of Pittsburgh, 2019-20

Arts and Sciences GSO Travel Grant, University of Pittsburgh, 2020 & 2019

Outstanding Presenter Award, Grad Expo, University of Pittsburgh, 2019

Department of Economics Summer Fellowship, University of Pittsburgh, 2018

Arts and Sciences Graduate Fellowship, University of Pittsburgh, 2016-17

Dr. Olive Reddick Book Grant, Delhi School of Economics, 2012-14

Suniti Goyal Gold Medal, Shri Ram College of Commerce, 2012

Skand Gupta Memorial Award, Shri Ram College of Commerce, 2010

## Presentations and Workshops

2022 Behavioral Research in Economics Workshop (scheduled)

ESA's Job-Market Candidates Seminar Series (scheduled)

ESA North American Regional Meeting (scheduled)

Rising Scholars Conference at Chicago Booth (scheduled)

Stanford Institute for Theoretical Economics, Experimental Economics Session

ESA Special Meeting

2021 ESA North American Regional Meeting

briq Summer School in Behavioral Economics

NBER Decentralization Conference: Mechanism Design for Vulnerable Populations (discussant)

Online Summer School in Modern Difference in Differences Design, University of Milan

2020 IFREE's Graduate Student Workshop in Experimental Economics

2019 FAIR-Rady Spring School in Behavioral Economics at UC San Diego

Poster Session at Grad Expo, University of Pittsburgh

## Professional Activities

*Reviewer:* Journal of Political Economy Microeconomics; Journal of Law, Economics and Organization; Journal of Demographic Economics

*Membership:* American Economic Association; Economic Science Association

### *Academic Service:*

Member, Pitt Economics Diversity Committee, 2020-21 & 2019-20  
TA/TF Mentor, University of Pittsburgh, 2020-21  
Student Representative, Pitt Economics Graduate Committee, 2019-20  
Chair, Women in Economics Graduate Student Organization, 2019-20  
Peer Mentor, Pitt Economics Graduate Students Mentorship Initiative, 2017-19  
Faculty, Remedial Classes at Shri Ram College of Commerce, 2014-16

### **Computer Skills**

Proficient: Stata, L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, Qualtrics, ZTree, OTree, Microsoft Office Suite  
Working Knowledge: Python, JavaScript, HTML, Matlab

### **Other Information**

Certification: National Eligibility Test (NET) for Lectureship in Economics, University Grants Commission of India, 2014  
Languages: Hindi (native), English (fluent)  
Citizenship: India

### **Research Abstracts**

#### **Can Temporary Affirmative Action Improve Representation?** (*Job Market Paper*)

Employers' biased beliefs about underrepresented groups may not correct on their own due to less hiring of and subsequent learning about workers from these groups. This paper explores whether temporary affirmative action can correct biased beliefs and in turn improve representation even after the policy is lifted. I elicit employer hiring decisions and beliefs about potential employee performance in two between-subject experimental treatments: a control treatment without affirmative action and a temporary affirmative action treatment. While beliefs and hiring are biased against women in the control treatment, I find in the temporary affirmative action treatment that representation improves even after affirmative action is lifted. This increase is partially driven by employers' beliefs about performance - where employers who are most likely to discriminate against women show the greatest reduction in gender bias in beliefs which in turn shift hiring choices toward of women. The results shed light on how temporary affirmative action policy can break a cycle of under-representation by correcting biased beliefs.

#### **The Experimenters' Dilemma: Inferential Preferences Over Populations** (Joint with L. Rigotti and A. Wilson)

We compare three populations commonly used in experiments by economists and other social scientists: undergraduate students at a physical location (lab), Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk), and Prolific. The comparison is made along three dimensions: the noise in the data due to inattention, the cost per observation, and the elasticity of response. We draw samples from each population, examining decisions in four one-shot games with varying tensions between the individual and socially efficient choices. When there is no tension, where individual and pro-social incentives coincide, noisy behavior accounts for 60% of the observations on MTurk, 19% on Prolific, and 14% for the lab. Taking costs into account, if noisy data is the only concern Prolific dominates from an inferential power point of view, combining relatively low noise with a cost per observation one fifth of the lab's. However, because the lab population is more sensitive to treatment, across our main PD game comparison the lab still outperforms both Prolific and MTurk.

**Well Excuse Me! Replicating and Connecting Excuse-Seeking Behaviors** (Joint with B. Ahumada, Y. Chen, K. Hyde, M. Lepper, W. Mathews, N. Silveus, L. Vesterlund, T. Weidman, A. Wilson, K. P. Winichakul and L. Zhou)

Excuse-seeking behavior that facilitates replacing altruistic choices with self-interested ones has been documented in several domains. In a laboratory study, we replicate three leading papers on this topic: Dana et al. (2007), and the use of information avoidance; Exley (2015), and the use of differential risk preferences; and Di Tella et al. (2015), and the use of motivated beliefs. The replications were conducted as part of a graduate course, attempting to embed one answer to the growing call for experimental replications within the pedagogic process. We fully replicate the simpler Dana et al. paper, and broadly replicate the core findings for the other two projects, though with reduced effect sizes and a failure to replicate on some secondary measures. Finally, we attempt to connect behaviors to facilitate the understanding of how each fit within the broader literature. However, we find no connections across domains.

**Going Virtual: A Step-by-Step Guide to Taking the In-Person Experimental Lab Online** (Joint with D. Danz, M. Lepper, L. Vesterlund and K. P. Winichakul)

This guide provides a detailed account of procedures for conducting traditional in-person laboratory experiments in a “virtual setting.” The main objective of these procedures is to maintain the control of traditional in-person lab studies when conducting studies over the internet. Using the participant pool of the in-person lab the key procedural steps include participants having their webcams on throughout the experiment, technical screenings and attention pledges, playing pre-recorded instructions out loud, upholding clear experimenter roles and communication protocols when interacting with participants, and finally detailed and scripted procedures for managing participants throughout the session. The described procedures have been used for more than 100 sessions and have secured results that are indistinguishable from those from the in-person lab.

## References

Prof. Lise Vesterlund (Co-Chair)  
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## Placement Officers

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