

Akshay Moorthy

Senior SNSF Researcher, Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Lausanne

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Employment

POST-DOCTORAL (SENIOR SNSF) RESEARCHER

Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Lausanne 2024 – 2028

NON-ACADEMIC WORK EXPERIENCE

Product Manager, The Walt Disney Company 2015 – 2016

Product Manager, MakeMyTrip Group 2011 – 15

Education

Ph.D. Economics, Norwegian School of Economics/FAIR, Bergen, Norway 2019 – 2024

Visiting Fellow, Harvard University, Cambridge MA, USA 2023

M.S. Economics, Norwegian School of Economics, Bergen, Norway 2017 – 2019

M.S. Marketing, Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad, India 2009 – 2011

B.Tech. Information and Communication Technology, DA-IICT, Gandhingar, India 2003 – 2007

Research Fields

Behavioural and experimental economics

Development economics

Teaching Experience

Econometrics Fall 2018, 2020, Spring 2022

Behavioural Economics Fall 2021, 2022

Petroleum Economics Spring 2021

Research

WORK IN PROGRESS

Beliefs, preferences, and identity in social learning. (job market paper, [download](#))

This paper reports from a series of large-scale survey experiments aimed at identifying whether people have preferences over the social identity of information sources. I examine both naturally occurring identities (caste and religion in India), and experimentally assigned identities (in a EU/US sample). The results show that when the quality of information is known, the identity of the messenger does not influence learning. Further, participants react strongly to signals

of information quality in all settings and descriptive results suggest that people may rely on pre-existing beliefs about the abilities of different identity groups in the absence of quality signals. Finally, I show that people prefer to learn from non-social sources (a computer algorithm) than from other people. Taken together, the results suggest that experts and policymakers should prioritise emphasising the quality of information.

Paternalistic preferences and beliefs across the world. (with Bartling, Cappelen, Hermes, Skivenes and Tungodden)

The paper presents evidence from a global survey experiment with $\approx 65,000$ participants from 60 countries on the heterogeneity in paternalistic preferences within and across countries, and maps these preferences to the support for specific types of paternalistic policies. Globally, support for soft interventions greatly exceeds the support for hard interventions. There is striking variation in the difference in levels of support for hard and soft interventions, which we attribute to differences in preferences. The paper also studies how people's preferences for paternalistic policies relate to various cultural and country-level characteristics.

Macro-economic shocks and preferences for inequality acceptance. (with Ålmas, Cappelen, Sørensen and Tungodden)

This paper studies how people's economic experiences shape their preferences for inequality acceptance both during their lifetimes, and through cultural transmission. We combine data from a global survey experiment where individuals from 60 countries make real redistributive decisions with macroeconomic indicators and ethnographic data. The results show that an increased exposure to poor economic growth causes people to become substantially more meritocratic. Further, people whose ancestors came from a more volatile environment are likely to be more meritocratic, and there is suggestive evidence that the two are correlated in a society's folklore.

PUBLISHED ARTICLES

The effect of rainfall shocks on early childhood development in Uganda. Moorthy, Akshay. *Economics Letters* (2021): 109764. ([download](#))

Shocks faced in early life have been linked with persistent inequalities in long-term health and economic outcomes. This paper studies the link between seasonal rainfall shocks and early childhood development in rural Uganda. The results indicate that rainfall shocks during the Ugandan harvest season in the in-utero period and first year of life are positively associated with the cognitive and non-cognitive development of 3- to 5-year-old children. This contributes to the literature on the persistence of economic inequalities caused by adversities in early life.

Barnehage for utvikling (Kindergartens for Development). Moorthy, Akshay and Nasgowitz, Arne. *Magma* (6/2019)

Professional Activities

PRESENTATIONS AND CONFERENCES

2023: Copenhagen Business School, ESA Europe meeting (University of Exeter), ESA online seminar

2022: Summer School in Behavioural Economics (UC San Diego), FAIR–Max Planck Institute Online Workshop, FAIR Midway Conference

2020: FAIR Development workshop (NHH Bergen)

GRANTS

Research grant from Centre for Ethics, Norwegian School of Economics – 2022

Mobility grant from Statistics Norway (SSB) – 2022

REFEREEING

PLoS One

Technical skills

PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES

C/C++, Java, Javascript, Python, SQL

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS/EXPERIMENTATION

R, STATA, OTree

Personal Information

Citizenship: India

Languages: English, Hindi (fluent), Tamil (native), Norwegian (basic)

References

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