Application for Economics of Digitization Tutorial

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Graduate Study

I am enrolled in the PhD program in Economics at the Toulouse School of Economics since September 2017. My primary fields of interest are Empirical Industrial Organization and Development Economics. Before coming to TSE, I worked for two years, simultaneously at the World Bank office in New Delhi and at the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations. I completed the Msc Economics degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and my bachelors degree in Economics from the University of Delhi.

Research in Progress

Explaining smartphone adoption in India

In this paper, I study the handset market in India between 2007 and 2018, with a particular focus on the adoption of smartphones. In 2018, according to the most optimistic estimates, smartphones accounted for only 47.2% of the total market, with low quality feature phones accounting for the rest. Household survey data puts this number even lower at 30%. In light of large scale public expenditure on initiatives to promote digitisation (bringing services online, launching public

service apps etc), understanding the limited adoption of smartphones is pertinent to policy. I use new handset level data on sales, prices and characteristics to estimate a discrete choice model of demand and supply. I use the estimates to conduct two main counterfactual exercises. The first evaluates the link between changing consumer incomes and adoption by proposing a subsidy for smartphones. The second quantifies the impact of increased competition in a complementary market (mobile internet services) on the adoption of smartphones.

Increasing cost of cash and digitisation: Evidence from a natural experiment in India

In this paper, I use novel household level survey data to evaluate the impact of a natural experiment – a short term monetary shock, on the uptake of digital platforms. This monetary shock increased the cost of holding cash for everyone in India without prior notice. I build a measure of exposure to the shock by classifying households into different groups based on their distance from the nearest bank branch or ATM. I use matching methods to compute the heterogeneous effects of the shock on the use of payment platforms. Ongoing work looks at whether the shock changed the financial literacy and financial behaviour of people as they became more accustomed to using digital payment methods.

Is the first movers' advantage sufficient to protect new product innovations in the presence of widespread imitation?

In this preliminary and exploratory joint work with Luise Eisefeld (PhD student, TSE), we look at the links between widespread imitation of product characteristics and firms' incentives to innovate. We explore the characteristics of firms that imitate and those that innovate in a multi-product oligopoly with a crowded product space. We use a structural model of demand and supply to set this up. We use the unique context of the Indian market, where the product space at each price point, as well as the market size has been continuously expanding. Counterfactual simulations will explore whether stronger patent protections would be welfare enhancing as compared to the weakly enforced patents that are currently prevalent.