

Syeda Jahirin Aktari

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Economics

Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Carbondale, Illinois
Advisor: Professor Alison Watts

(2022 – 2027, Expected)

M.Sc. in Applied Economics

BRAC University, Dhaka, Bangladesh (Cum Laude)

(2020 – 2022)

B.Sc. in Economics

BRAC University, Dhaka, Bangladesh (Summa Cum Laude)

(2016 – 2019)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Microeconomics, Industrial Organization, Education Economics, Causal Inference

JOB MARKET PAPER

Higher Education and Its Effect on Political Participation: Evidence from Egypt

This study investigates the impact of increasing access to higher education in Egypt through the abolition of university fees and the large-scale construction of public universities during the 1960s on long-term political participation, as a natural experiment. Using repeated cross-sectional data from the World Values Survey, we analyze the impact by exploiting variation in birth cohorts' exposure to reforms. We use five measures of political engagement, including political interest, electoral participation (voting), and non-electoral political activities (signing petitions, joining boycotts and lawful demonstrations). We found that this increasing access to university education significantly increased university attainment. However, the result shows heterogeneous effects across different political participation. Compared to men, women benefited less from this university expansion in terms of university education attainment; however, we observe a stronger influence on women's political participation than on men.

WORKING PAPERS

Privacy Preservation and Efficiency in a Buyer-Seller Network: The Case of Spectrum Sharing (NSF-funded, Grant #2332010)

Does Higher Education Influence Gender Role Attitudes? Evidence From Egypt

WORK IN PROGRESS

The Composition of State Taxation and Business Dynamism: Evidence from U.S. Firm Entry and Job Flows, 1978–2022 (with Yaren Gocer and Mahesh M. Dhole)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Research Assistant, NSF-Funded Project

(Fall 2023 – Fall 2024)

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

- Contributed to an NSF-funded project on privacy protection in spectrum-sharing markets, examining trade-offs between data privacy, efficiency, and market pricing mechanisms.
- Developed an economic model demonstrating how privacy zones influence the buyer-seller network and affect equilibrium pricing.
- Analyzed how privacy mechanisms increase buyer payoffs and shape primary-user pricing strategies, leading to competitive versus monopoly pricing outcomes.
- Used game theory and computational simulations to model strategic interactions between primary and secondary users in the spectrum-sharing market.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record – Health Economics (ECON 334)

(Summer 2025)

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

- Taught the demand for and supply of health and medical services, healthcare market structure, the role of government in the healthcare industry, and models of regional coordination of hospital facilities.
- Guided students in applying course concepts to current policy debates and real-world health outcomes.

Instructor of Record – Economics of Contemporary Social Issues (ECON 113)

(Spring 2025)

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

- Taught core economic concepts and evaluated policies designed to address a range of social problems.
- Led discussions and provided step-by-step guidance on analytical and graphical economic problem-solving.

Graduate Teaching Assistant – Introduction to Microeconomics (ECON 240)

(Fall 2022 – Spring 2023)

Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Department of Economics

Graduate Teaching Assistant – Online Undergraduate Program, College of Business

(Summer 2026 – Present)

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

- Course assisted: MGMT 208: Business Data Analysis; MGMT 304: Introduction to Management; MGMT 446: Leadership and Managerial Behavior

Graduate Teaching Assistant

(Spring 2020 – Spring 2021)

BRAC University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Courses Assisted:

- ECO 310: History of Economic Thought
- ECO 306: Urban Economics
- ECO 313: Environmental Economics

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Deputy Manager – BRAC, Migration Programme

(March 2021 – July 2022)

- Secured, with the program team, \$2.5 million in funding for Sustainable Reintegration and Improved Migration Governance in collaboration with the EU and IRARA.
- Led the economic reintegration of 208 returnees, providing business planning support, financial resources, and ongoing monitoring.

CONFERENCE AND PRESENTATIONS

Midwest Economics Association Annual Meetings, Chicago, IL (2026)

Southern Economic Association, 95th Annual Meeting, Tampa, FL (2025)

Brown Bag Seminar, Southern Illinois University Carbondale (2025)

Southern Economic Association, 94th Annual Meeting, Washington, DC (2024)

Brown Bag Seminar, Southern Illinois University Carbondale (2024)

AWARDS AND HONORS

- Dissertation Research Assistantship Award, SIU Carbondale (2025–2026)
- Cum Laude, M.Sc. in Applied Economics, BRAC University (2022)
- Summa Cum Laude, B.Sc. in Economics, BRAC University (2019)
- Full Tuition Scholarship, BRAC University (2016–2019)

LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

Student Mentor, BRAC University (2018–2019)

Director, BRAC University Economics Club (2017–2018)

Research Contributor, Bangladesh Chars Tobacco Assessment Project (2018)

Research Support and Data Analysis, Urban Economy of a Metropolis of Bangladesh (2020)

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Technical: STATA, R, EViews, MATLAB, MS Excel

REFERENCES

Alison Watts (Advisor)

Professor, School of Analytics, Finance, and Economics
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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