The conventional practice of residential electric utilities is to aggregate customers based on geography. All of the customers in a particular area are serviced as a unit and offered the same rate plan based on the average consumption across the population. The proliferation of smart meters allows for a different approach: aggregating customers, and offering them rate plans, based on their actual consumption patterns instead of just geographical proximity. Patel’s research explores methods for designing customer aggregates based on individual consumption history in a way that takes into account both how costly and how uncertain the customer's consumption is. With these methods, the utility can manage both the average cost of servicing an aggregate as well as the risk of fluctuations in that cost. These aggregates can then be offered rate plans tailored to their consumption characteristics. Patel’s methods are data-centered, relying on actual smart meter data for large customer populations.