MIT Economics

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DOCTORAL STUDIES

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
PhD, Economics, Expected completion June 2024
DISSERTATION: "Essays in Public Finance and Urban Economics"

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AND REFERENCES

Professor James Poterba
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Professor Jonathan Gruber
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PRIOR EDUCATION

University of Oxford — 2018
MPhil, Economics

Princeton University — 2016
AB, Economics, *summa cum laude*

CITIZENSHIP USA **GENDER** Male

FIELDS

Primary Field: Public Finance
Secondary Fields: Urban Economics, Labor Economics

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Public Finance & Public Policy (UG, 6.5/7.0 average rating) — 2020
Teaching Assistant to Prof. Jonathan Gruber

RELEVANT POSITIONS

U.S. Council of Economic Advisers Staff Economist to Chair Cecilia Rouse	2021–22
Research Assistant for Prof. David Autor	2017–18

FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS

Jerry A. Hausman Graduate Dissertation Fellowship, MIT	2023–24
Honorable Mention for Best Student Paper, International Institute of Public Finance	2023
George and Obie Shultz Fund, MIT	2021–2022
NBER Center for Aging and Health Research Pilot Grant (with Gopi Shah Goda)	2022
C. Lowell Harriss Dissertation Fellowship, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy	2020–21
Best Student Paper, Urban Economics Association	2020
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship	2018–23
Rhodes Scholarship	2016–18
Burton G. Malkiel ’64 Senior Thesis Prize in Finance, Princeton University	2016

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Referee: *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, American Economic Review, American Economic Review: Insights, Industrial Relations, International Economic Review, Journal of Housing Economics, Journal of Public Economics, Journal of Politics, Journal of Urban Economics, Regional Science and Urban Economics, Quarterly Journal of Economics*

Service:

Mentor, Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program	2020–21
MIT Kaufman Teaching Certificate Program	2020
Organizer, MIT Third-Year Lunch (with Charlie Rafkin)	2020

External Presentations:

Freddie Mac	2024 (invited)
International Institute on Public Finance	2023
NBER Summer Institute	2022
Congressional Budget Office	2022
U.S. Department of Labor	2022
Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research	2022
NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy	2020
Urban Economics Association	2020
Stanford Institute on Theoretical Economics	2019
Wallis Institute of Political Economy (co-author)	2019

PUBLICATIONS

“A Welfare Analysis of Occupational Licensing in U.S. States” (with Morris M. Kleiner), *Review of Economic Studies,* Vol. 90 (October 2023), 2481–2516.

We assess the welfare consequences of occupational licensing for workers and consumers. We estimate a model of labor market equilibrium in which licensing restricts labor supply but also affects labor demand via worker quality and selection. On the margin of occupations licensed differently between U.S. states, we find that licensing raises wages and hours but reduces employment. We estimate an average welfare loss of 12 percent of occupational surplus. Workers and consumers respectively bear 70 and 30 percent of the incidence. Higher willingness to pay offsets 80 percent of higher prices for consumers, and higher wages compensate workers for 60 percent of the cost of mandated investment in occupation-specific human capital. Welfare effects appear more favorable in occupations in which licensing is more common.

"The Price of Inclusion: Evidence from Housing Developer Behavior," *Review of Economics and Statistics*, forthcoming. Awarded Best Student Paper, 2020 Urban Economics Association.

In many cities, incentives and regulations lead developers to integrate low-income housing into market-rate buildings. How cost-effective are these policies? I study take-up of a tax incentive in New York City using a model in which developers trade off between tax savings and pre-tax income. I estimate the model using policy variation and microdata on all development from 2003 to 2015. The citywide marginal fiscal cost is $1.6 million per low-income unit. Differences in neighborhoods, not developer incidence, explain the cost premium over other housing programs. Weighing costs against external estimates of neighborhood effects, I find middle-class neighborhoods offer "opportunity bargains."

"The Impacts of Covid-19 Absences on Workers" (with Gopi Shah Goda), *Journal of Public Economics*, Vol. 222 (June 2023): 104889.

We show that Covid-19 illnesses and related work absences persistently reduce labor supply. Using an event study, we estimate that workers with week-long Covid-19 absences are 7 percentage points less likely to be in the labor force one year later compared to otherwise-similar workers who do not miss a week of work for health reasons. Our estimates suggest Covid-19 absences have reduced the U.S. labor force by approximately 500,000 people (0.2 percent of adults) and imply an average labor supply loss per Covid-19 absence equivalent to $9,000 in earnings, about 90 percent of which reflects losses beyond the initial absence week.

"A Natural Experiment on Discrimination in Elections" (with David E. Broockman), *Journal of Public Economics*, Vol. 188 (August 2020): 104201.

We exploit a natural experiment to study discrimination in elections. In Illinois Republican presidential primaries, voters vote for delegates bound to presidential candidates, but delegates' names convey information about their race and gender. We identify discrimination from variation in vote totals among delegates bound to the same presidential candidate and who face the same voters. Examining delegate vote totals from 2000 to 2016, we estimate nonwhite delegates receive 9 percent fewer votes. We find essentially no gender discrimination. Negligible incentives for statistical discrimination, costs to preferred presidential candidates, and heterogeneity are consistent with an interpretation of this behavior as taste-based.

RESEARCH PAPERS

"The Supply of Subsidized Housing" (Job Market Paper)

Subsidies to developers are a core instrument of housing policy. How much reaches households, and should the government use rent vouchers instead? I assess incidence and cost-effectiveness with a dynamic model of the housing market and new data on developers competing for Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. I estimate the model with three sources of policy variation: quasi-random assignment of subsidies, shocks to subsidy generosity, and kinked incentives to reduce rents. I find 31 percent of the subsidy accrues to households, while the remainder goes to developer profits (44 percent) or is dissipated in application costs (25 percent). Household benefits mostly reflect below-market rents rather than general-equilibrium effects. In counterfactuals, vouchers achieve the same household benefit at a 25-percent fiscal savings.

"Eviction as Bargaining Failure: Misperceptions and Hostility in the Rental Housing Market" (with Charlie Rafkin).

Formal eviction from rental housing is widespread and costly, spurring interest in anti-eviction policies. The desirability of policy intervention depends on whether evictions come from efficient non-bargaining or inefficient bargaining failures. We test for two causes of bargaining failure—hostile social preferences and misperceptions—by conducting lab-in-the-field experiments in Memphis, Tennessee with 1,808 tenants and 373 landlords facing eviction. We find that 25–39% of relationships engage in dominated hostile behaviors in real-stakes Dictator Games. Both parties misperceive court or bargaining payoffs in ways that undermine bargaining. Motivated by the possibility of inefficient eviction, we evaluate an emergency rental assistance program in Memphis using administrative data. Event-study estimates suggest the program had small effects on eviction. Combining the event-study and lab-in-the-field results, we estimate a bargaining model and find that 22% of evictions are inefficient, of which 72% are caused by hostility. These forces affect eviction policy: Perverse selection on altruism partially explains the program's small treatment effects.

"Self-Targeting in U.S. Transfer Programs" (with Charlie Rafkin and Adam Solomon). Runner-Up for Best Student Paper (ITAX Award) at the 2023 International Institute of Public Finance.

Transfer receipt is voluntary and costly, generating "self-targeting" through selective take-up among the eligible. How does self-targeting select on need, and what are its policy implications? We show self-targeting is advantageous in eight U.S. transfers: On average, recipients have lower consumption and lifetime incomes than eligible nonrecipients with similar current incomes. Due to self-targeting, these transfers provide 50 to 75 percent more to the consumption-poorest and lifetime-poorest than would automatic transfers that are distributionally equivalent by income. Self-targeting makes automatic transfers undesirable: We estimate the social benefits of self-targeting are approximately six cents per transfer dollar, generally exceeding the social costs of ordeals.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

"Integration Versus Supply: Inclusionary Zoning in Greater Boston" (with Paul S. Willen and Lauren Lambie-Hanson).

We study the trade-off between social integration and housing supply in inclusionary-zoning (IZ) mandates for low-income units in new housing. We exploit notches in IZ regulations across Boston-area municipalities to estimate housing supply. We will also leverage city-census data on IZ-unit demographics to estimate the integration benefits. We intend to combine our results with a model of housing demand to conduct a welfare and distributional analysis of IZ.

"Prioritizing Investments in Health with Competing Risks" (with Theodore Caputi).

This project will estimate the social returns, as measured by gains in quality-adjusted life-years, to potential reductions in cause-specific mortality risks. We will use genetic variation in disease susceptibility ("Mendelian randomization") as instruments to estimate a competing-risk model of death. Our goals are to assess the overall magnitude of correlated-risk bias, which compares causal effects to actuarial estimates of disease burdens, along with patterns across diseases and demographics of the correlated-risk bias.