MIT Economics

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DOCTORAL STUDIES

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
PhD, Economics, Expected completion June 2026
DISSERTATION: "Essays on Inequality"

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AND REFERENCES

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PRIOR EDUCATION

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) 2017
SB Physics and SB Materials Science and Engineering

CITIZENSHIP USA **GENDER:** Female

FIELDS

Primary Field: Labor

Secondary Fields: Public Economics, Education

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

PhD Labor Economics II (14.662), MIT 2026
TA to Professors David Autor and Nina Roussille

Microeconomic Theory and Public Policy (14.03), MIT 2024, 2025
TA to Professor David Autor

	Data Interpretation (ECON 21300), University of Chicago TA to Professor Steven Levitt	2019
	Solid-State Chemistry (3.091), MIT TA to Professors Niels Holten-Andersen and Robert Macfarlane	2016

RELEVANT POSITIONS

RA to Professor Amy Finkelstein	2020-21
RA to Professors Kerwin K. Charles and Erik Hurst	2019-20
RA to Professor Steven Levitt	2018-19
Investment Banking Analyst, Goldman Sachs	2017-18

FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS

Horowitz Foundation for Social Policy Grant	2025
AIBM Student Research Fellowship	2025-26
JPAL European Social Inclusion Initiative Grant ($26,000)	2025
NAEd / Spencer Dissertation Fellowship, *semi-finali*st	2025
Jerry A. Hausman Graduate Dissertation Fellowship	2023-24
George and Obie Shultz Fund	2021-25
Global Priorities Fellowship	2020
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship	2020
Department of Economics Fellowship	2020
Phi Beta Kappa	2017

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Referee: Industrial and Labor Relations Review (ILR Review)

Conference Presentations: CEP Education Conference at LSE, Yale North East Universities Gender Day (co-author), IZA PhD Workshop in Labor and Behavioral Economics (co-author)

Service: Graduate Resident Advisor at MIT Next House**,** MIT Committee of Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid, MIT Labor Lunch Organizer, President of Graduate Economic Association, MIT-Harvard Application Assistance and Mentorship Program

RESEARCH PAPERS

"Prediction or Prejudice? Standardized Testing and University Access" (Job Market Paper) (with Kartik Vira)

Do high-stakes standardized tests expand or inhibit opportunity for low-SES students? We answer this question in the context of the UK's staggered elimination of pre-university exams in favor of teachers' predicted exam grades. Eliminating testing increases the university enrollment of low-income students by 3 percentage points (7%), while leaving wealthy students' enrollment unchanged. Marginal students induced to enroll in university attain employment at better firms and, in expectation, earn £50,000—£100,000 more over their careers, in net present value. Paradoxically, standardized exams exhibit no calibration bias against marginal low-income students—accurately predicting their university success—whereas teacher-supplied grades are systematically biased in their favor. Despite proper calibration, standardized

tests inhibit low-SES students by deterring human capital investment. When tests are eliminated, 5% of low-income students shift into academic tracks. These findings highlight how disparate impacts can arise even when screening algorithms are unbiased. When the measurement of information itself poses a direct disutility, standardized tests generate disparities that commence earlier in the pipeline.

"Friends in Higher Places: Social Fit and University Choice"
(with Kartik Vira)

Low-income students are less likely to attend elite universities than equally qualified high-income peers, in large part because they apply at lower rates. We study whether this reflects lack of exposure to students who have attended top universities, and how exposure affects students' perceptions. Using UK administrative data, we exploit "breakthrough" events when a school first sends a student to a top university. Applications from that school to that university subsequently rise by 30%. This access promotes upward mobility: marginal entrants graduate at typical rates and earn £4,000 more annually than matched control students, despite coming from relatively poor backgrounds. To understand why students who lack exposure might not apply, we turn to a field experiment in British schools. We find that a primary barrier is students' beliefs about their social fit. At baseline, low-income students are more pessimistic about their social fit at elite universities, but not their chances of receiving an offer or graduating. Students randomly assigned to view short videos of undergraduates discussing their experiences are 6 percentage points more likely to apply to the speaker's university. This treatment makes students more positive about their social fit at that university, with no effect on other beliefs. Finally, when matched with mentors, students primarily seek out information about social life. Our findings highlight perceptions of the social environment at elite universities as a central barrier to applications and illustrate scalable treatments to promote access and social mobility.

"Firms Believing Women Get Less Means They Do"
(with Nancy Wang)

This paper examines an employer-driven mechanism behind the early-career gender earnings gap using novel data on MIT graduates' job offers and negotiation process. We document three key findings. First, women receive lower initial compensation offers than men within an employer-occupation. Second, this gap is entirely concentrated in non-salary components—signing bonus and equity—with no gap in base salary. Third, we find no gender differences in job search, and women negotiate as frequently and successfully as men. These findings also generalize to a national sample of high-skill workers in a dataset from Levels.fyi. To understand these patterns, we develop a model showing that a small number of discriminatory firms leads all firms in the market to lowball women in equilibrium. This market-wide gender gap is sustained through outside offers and cannot be closed by changes in worker

behavior. We validate this mechanism using an incentivized resume evaluation experiment with recruiters, where we find that firms expect other firms to offer women less. Our results highlight the role of firm behavior—rather than worker decisions alone—in perpetuating gender pay disparities.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

"Confidence in Ability and Job Search"
(with Maxim Massenkoff and Nancy Wang)

Can a credible ability signal to high-skill workers augment job search behavior and improve worker allocation across firms? We partner with a large online interviewing platform that screens workers for employers in the tech sector and identifies exceptional users as "one of the best-performing coders on the platform," communicates this fact to the worker, and subsequently offers them access to interview with select firms. Using a fuzzy regression discontinuity (RD) design around the exogenous performance threshold used to identify these users, we find evidence of increased and more ambitious job search as a result of the signal. Workers just above the threshold are 20 percentage points more likely to switch jobs within a year, with effects concentrated among workers with less than 5 years of experience. Workers from lower-ranked universities who did not previously work at an elite firm see improved labor market outcomes 2-5 years after first using the platform—these workers are more likely to work at an elite tech firm and work at companies with 12% higher expected compensation. We find that more than 85% of job switches occur off-platform, suggesting that access to interviews on the platform did not mediate these effects. Instead, our findings are consistent with increased and more ambitious worker search after receiving a credible signal about their ability, particularly among groups that were previously less likely to have considered these opportunities. Our next steps include generating measures of worker self-confidence from self-assessments and video recordings of interviews and characterizing worker-firm match quality.

"No Strings Attached: The Distributional Effects of Unraveling in College Admissions"
(with Phi Adajar and Kartik Vira)

Competition for talent can cause labor market unraveling, where institutions create inefficient matches by extending offers before candidate ability is fully revealed. We study the impacts of early offers in the UK college admission system on college sorting and match quality. We build a theoretical model of student and university choices, generating three predictions about the resulting match, which we then validate empirically in this setting. First, universities with lower student quality are more likely to give early offers; we find that universities in the lowest quintile of yield are 9.4 percentage points more likely to use early offers than the highest quintile. Second, early offers divert high-ability students away from the most competitive universities; in our context, students are 9.6 percentage points less likely to attend an elite university. Finally, also consistent with our model, we find that universities preferentially

target high-achieving students with early offers. These early offers also benefit students directly: students who accept early offers are 6.2 percentage points more likely to graduate on time, though after three more years, this gap is statistically indistinguishable from zero. Universities collectively banned these offers in 2021; to understand the impact of this ban, we build a structural model to evaluate the effects on student match quality and labor market outcomes and compare this system to alternative market designs.

PUBLICATIONS

"Trade Competition and the Decline in Union Organizing: Evidence from Certification Elections" *Journal of Labor Economics, forthcoming.*
(with Kerwin K. Charles and Matthew S. Johnson)