MIT Economics

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DOCTORAL STUDIES

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
PhD, Economics, expected completion June 2027
DISSERTATION: "Essays on the Economics of Education"

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AND REFERENCES

Professor Parag Pathak
MIT Department of Economics
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Professor Esther Duflo
MIT Department of Economics,
University of Zurich
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Professor Nikhil Agarwal
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PRIOR EDUCATION

Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2021
S.B. in Mathematical Economics

CITIZENSHIP USA **GENDER** Non-binary

FIELDS

Primary Fields: Education, Labor
Secondary Fields: Development, Empirical Market Design

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Kaufman Teaching Certificate, MIT Teaching + Learning Lab 2025
14.19 Market Design (undergraduate) 2023
Teaching Assistant to Professor Parag Pathak (rating 6.6/7)
14.02 Principles of Macroeconomics (undergraduate) 2021
Teaching Assistant to Professor Ricardo Caballero (rating 6.5/7)

14.27 Economics and E-Commerce (undergraduate) 2019
Teaching Assistant to Professor Sara Fisher Ellison (rating 5.8/7)

RELEVANT POSITIONS

Research Associate, Blueprint Labs, MIT 2022–present
Research Assistant, MIT 2022
Professor Parag Pathak
Research Assistant, MIT and Harvard 2020
Professors Benjamin Olken and Gabriel Kreindler
Research Assistant, MIT 2018–2021
Professors Ernst Berndt and Rena Conti

FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS

Jerry A. Hausman Dissertation Fellowship, MIT Economics 2025–2026
NBER Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship, Global Math Talent 2025–2026
NSF Graduate Research Fellowship 2021–2026
Phi Beta Kappa, MIT 2021
Burchard Scholar, MIT 2020

Research Grants

George and Obie Shultz Fund	$64,500	2023–2026
Carina Initiatives	$4,300,000	2025, 2026
Founders Pledge	£310,000	2024
Agency Fund	$600,000	2023, 2024
J-PAL Science for Progress Initiative	$72,000	2023

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Referee
Econometrica, Review of Economics and Statistics

Service
Graduate Representative, MIT Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid 2025–present
Graduate Resident Advisor, MIT Division of Student Life 2022–present
Graduate Representative, MIT GRA Training Committee 2023
Labor Coffee Organizer, MIT Department of Economics 2022–2023
Educational Counselor (Admissions Interviewer), MIT Alumni Association 2021–2024
Undergraduate Representative, MIT Committee on the Undergraduate Program 2020–2021

RESEARCH PAPERS

"The Winner's Curse in Test-Blind Admissions" (Job Market Paper)
(with Nagisa Tadjfar and Kartik Vira)
High-stakes final exams shape students' educational paths in two ways: universities can screen applicants with more information about their ability, changing the equilibrium *match*, and exams may create *incentives* for students to exert effort. We study these forces using the staggered introduction of unconditional offers in UK university admissions, which allowed students to matriculate regardless of results from their age-18 exams (A-levels). Students who accept an unconditional offer score 0.14 SD below observably similar

students who decline one, and so programs that make unconditional offers face a winner's curse. We show this gap reflects students' private information rather than reduced effort: using a two-way fixed effects design, we find that exposure to unconditional offers has a precisely estimated null effect on students' age-18 exam performance. Unconditional offers have positive match effects for recipients: exposure increases matriculation by 1.1pp, largely at middle-tercile universities. Using a structural model, we find that unconditional offers are anti-meritocratic, as they benefit the lowest-achieving quartile of students at the expense of higher-achieving students, lowering total welfare by 0.5% relative to a ban. Post-qualification admissions, under which students apply after receiving their scores, raise welfare by 14.2% through better sorting. This gain is mostly attributable to increased information for both sides of the market rather than to the change to a single-stage admissions system. Our results inform current policy debates in the UK, highlighting how the distributional effects of admissions policies depend on student information.

"Identifying and Nurturing Math Talent: Evidence from Tamil Nadu"
(with Esther Duflo, Glenn Ellison, Sara Fisher Ellison, and Harini Kannan)
This paper presents evidence from a randomized controlled trial designed to test how to best identify and support gifted students from disadvantaged backgrounds. To do so, we offered access to an advanced online prealgebra course and an internet-enabled tablet to 7th-grade public-school students from Tamil Nadu, whom we identified as having high potential using several alternative strategies. Our primary finding is that we were able to successfully identify students who succeeded in challenging coursework originally designed as enrichment material for students with much stronger math preparation. We randomly assigned identification methods, which allowed us to investigate their relative effectiveness. We find that the combination of existing administrative scores and engagement with an extract of the textbook distributed as a physical booklet best predicts engagement and success with the course material. We additionally cross-randomized treatments to evaluate program design (including group and individual tutoring, incentives for students, access to computer labs), and find that the simplest-to-scale version without tutoring led to the highest engagement.

Presented by coauthor at NBER Economics of Talent Meeting (Fall 2025) and NBER Economics of Education Meeting (Spring 2026).

"A Practitioner's Guide to Estimating School Effects in Centralized Assignment Systems"
Centralized school assignment with lottery tie-breaking generates quasi-experiments that identify school effects, but existing methods require applicants' rank-order lists and lottery numbers, data that is not always available. I characterize which data from a match identify a propensity score under which offers are ignorable. When each school draws its own lottery, offers among applicants who reach a school are randomly assigned, so comparing applicants offered and rejected there requires only waitlists. Under a single lottery, this comparison is biased, and the order of each applicant's rejections is also needed.

Rank-order lists identify the score without lottery numbers, while the assignment and published aggregates do not in general. I show how to compute each score in finite markets, how waitlist order reveals which schools share a lottery, and how to handle priorities and screened schools. In simulations, all valid designs recover the true effect, and richer data yields more precise estimates.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

"From Cubs to Bears: The Evolution of Charter Effectiveness in Chicago"
This paper estimates how the effectiveness of Chicago charter schools has changed between 2009 and 2025. Using random variation from admissions lotteries, I validate earlier research showing high returns to attending Chicago charter schools. I also show effectiveness decreased during the 2010s, but has rebounded in recent years. I explore determinants of these changes, including teacher qualifications, teacher turnover, leadership changes, curricular changes, and policy changes.

"School-House Shocks: The Effect of Neighborhood-based School Assignment Policies on Intracity Migration"
Affirmative action policies based on geographic characteristics are potentially manipulable by families who move in response to the policy, undermining policy goals and hurting families who the policy is intended to help. I test whether these channels have significant impacts in Chicago, where admissions to selective high schools depend on the demographics of a student's neighborhood. Using data from Chicago Public Schools and the Cook County Assessor's office, I find no effects of marginal tier assignment on short-term migration of families or long-term housing prices.

PRIOR WORK

"A Rising Tide for All or Wave for One? The Effect of Charter School Competition on District Achievement," *MIT Undergraduate Journal of Economics*, Vol. 20, 2021.

"Evaluating Strategic Play: Manipulations with Symmetric Information in the Boston Mechanism," Undergraduate thesis, MIT, 2021.

"The Surprising Hybrid Pedigree of Measures of Diversity and Economic Concentration" (with Ernst Berndt and Rena Conti), *NBER Working Paper* No. 26512, 2019.