MIT Economics

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DOCTORAL STUDIES

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
PhD, Economics, 2022 to 2027 (expected)
DISSERTATION: "Essays in Political and Behavioral Economics"

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AND REFERENCES

Professor Daron Acemoglu
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Professor Frank Schilbach
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Professor Tobias Salz
MIT Department of Economics
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PRIOR EDUCATION

Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand) 2021
Master of Commerce in Economics
Bachelor of Arts (Honors) in Philosophy
Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Economics

CITIZENSHIP USA, New Zealand, Belgium, Israel **GENDER:** Male

FIELDS

Primary Fields: Political Economy, Behavioral Economics
Secondary Fields: Labor Economics

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Behavioral Economics (PhD, MIT course 14.160) 2025
Teaching Assistant to Professors Frank Schilbach and Abhijit Banerjee [6.9/7.0; link to evaluations]

RELEVANT POSITIONS

Predoctoral Research Assistant for Professors Simon Jäger and Benjamin Schoefer 2020-22

FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS

Jerry A. Hausman Graduate Dissertation Fellowship (MIT Econ, 2025-26)
Humane Studies Fellowship (Institute for Humane Studies, 2025)
Emergent Ventures Grant (Mercatus Center, 2023)
Jan Whitwell Prize (New Zealand Association of Economists, 2021)
Seamus Hogan Prize (New Zealand Association of Economists, 2021)
Maurice Goldsmith Prize (Victoria University Philosophy Department, 2021)
MacMorran Prize in Mathematics (Victoria University, 2017)
JT Campbell Prize in Statistics (Victoria University, 2017)
SEF Prize in Second-Year Macroeconomics (Victoria University, 2017)

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Refereeing: American Economic Review, Quarterly Journal of Economics, Journal of Political Economy, AER: Insights, Journal of the European Economic Association, Economic Journal, Management Science

Conference presentations:
Early-Career Behavioral Economics Conference (Chicago, 2026)
Behavioral Economics Annual Meeting (JMC workshop, 2026)
Early-Career Behavioral Economics Conference (Bonn, 2024)
Chicago Booth Generative AI and Labor Mini-Conference (2024)
CESifo Behavioral Economics (2023)
NBER SI Digital Economics and Artificial Intelligence (lightning talk, 2023)

PUBLICATIONS

The Transmission of Reliable and Unreliable Information (with Thomas Graeber and Chris Roth), *Quarterly Journal of Economics,* forthcoming

Information often spreads and influences beliefs regardless of its reliability. We show that this occurs in part because indicators of reliability tend to be lost in the process of word-of-mouth transmission. We conduct controlled experiments where participants listen to economic forecasts and pass them on through voice messages. Other participants listen either to original or transmitted audio recordings and report incentivized beliefs. Across various transmitter incentive schemes, a claim's reliability is lost in transmission much more than the claim itself. Reliable and unreliable information, once filtered through transmission, impact listener beliefs similarly. Mechanism experiments show that reliability is lost not because it is perceived as less relevant or harder to transmit, but because it is less likely to come to mind during transmission. Evidence from our experiments, a large corpus of everyday conversations, and economic TV news shows that contextual cues can bring reliability to mind and induce its transmission, but situations in which people share information seldom contain such cues.

Experimental Evidence on the Productivity Effects of Generative Artificial Intelligence (with Whitney Zhang), *Science*, 2023

We examined the productivity effects of a generative artificial intelligence technology—the assistive chatbot ChatGPT—in the context of mid-level professional writing tasks. In a preregistered online experiment, we assigned

occupation-specific, incentivized writing tasks to 453 college-educated professionals, and randomly exposed half of them to ChatGPT. Our results show that ChatGPT substantially raised productivity: average time taken decreased by 40% and output quality rose by 18%. Inequality between workers decreased, and concern and excitement about AI temporarily rose. Workers exposed to ChatGPT during the experiment were 2x as likely to report using it in their real job two weeks after the experiment, and 1.6x as likely two months after the experiment.

The German Model of Industrial Relations: Balancing Flexibility and Collective Action (with Simon Jäger and Benjamin Schoefer), *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 2022

We give an overview of the two pillars of the "German model" of industrial relations: sectoral collective bargaining and firm-level codetermination. Relative to the United States, Germany outsources collective bargaining to the sectoral level, resulting in higher coverage and the avoidance of firm-level distributional conflict. Relative to other European countries, Germany makes it easy for employers to avoid coverage or use flexibility provisions to deviate downwards from collective agreements. The greater flexibility of the German system may reduce unemployment, but may also erode bargaining coverage and increase inequality. Meanwhile, firm-level codetermination through worker board representation and works councils creates cooperative dialogue between employers and workers. Board representation has few direct impacts owing to worker representatives' minority vote share, but works councils, which hold a range of substantive powers, may be more impactful. Overall, the German model highlights tensions between efficiency-enhancing flexibility and equity-enhancing collective action.

RESEARCH PAPERS

The Supply Side of Social Media (Job Market Paper) (with Aakaash Rao)

We study social media's distinctive model of content production. Unlike legacy media outlets, social media platforms do not professionally produce content optimized to appeal to viewers. Instead, they harvest the output of large numbers of amateur users creating content in pursuit of nonpecuniary rewards. The resulting scale and diversity of platforms' content libraries, combined with their ability to experimentally test new content on subsets of viewers, allows them to ex-post discover the content most appealing to each viewer. We develop a model of this process and show that it leads the content consumed in equilibrium to depend on viewer preferences (demand) but also on creator preferences (supply), because the scale powering platforms' discovery concentrates where creators are eager to produce. Collecting new data on Instagram, TikTok, and X/Twitter, we show that viewers' feeds are dominated by unpaid amateurs who produce envy-provoking “lifestyle” and partisan political content in pursuit of social status and expressive satisfaction. We experimentally generate supply- and demand-side shifters by manipulating viewers' feeds and eliciting creators' incentivized preferences while paying them to produce content. On the demand

side, pieces of lifestyle and partisan content are less likely to highly engage viewers than more benign entertainment. But these content types enjoy enormous supply-driven production scale. This enables platforms to cherry-pick the minority of such pieces viewers find more engaging than the marginal piece of entertainment. Estimating our model using the experimental variation, we calculate that supply-side preferences account for one- to two-thirds of the prevalence of lifestyle and partisan content in viewers' feeds.

The Business of the Culture War (with Aakaash Rao), 2026

We link the contemporary American "culture war" to the entry of 24-hour cable news networks, which we find emphasize cultural issues more than the broadcast networks preceding them and far more than political candidates. Estimating viewer preferences using household-by-second data, we show cable news faces a tradeoff: cultural content attracts non-news entertainment viewers while economic content attracts viewers of rival news outlets. Broadcast news and politicians similarly trade off the cultural content that appeals to the politically disengaged against the economic content that appeals to the politically engaged, but we show why cable has the strongest incentives to emphasize culture. In turn, constituencies quasi-randomly more exposed to cable news networks assign greater importance to cultural issues, and politicians run more cultural campaigns.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Complexity, Cooperation, and Conflict (with Thomas Graeber and Aakaash Rao)