WERISE CONFERENCE

October 3, 2025

Questrom School of Business

4th Floor

Boston University

Organized by:
Shreya Dutt, Catherine O'Donnell, Vasudha Ramakrishna with Chiara Margaria, and Daniele Paserman

October 3, 2025 (Friday)

8:30 am - 9:00 am	Coffee & Breakfast *Conference Room - 426/428/430*
9:00 am - 10:00 am	**Keynote Address**- Claudia Olivetti *Conference Room - 426/428/430*
10:00 am - 10:15 am	Break

Session 1: Two Parallel Tracks (10:15 - 12:00 PM)

25 minute talk + 10 minute discussion

Block 1: Profession Track

Room 418

Anna Stansbury (MIT) - "Class Gap in Career Promotion: Evidence from Academia" with Kyra Rodriguez *(On Zoom)*

Valeria Rueda (University of Nottingham) - How tinted are your glasses? Gender views, beliefs, and recommendations in hiring" with Anna Hochleitner, Fabio Tufano, Markus Eberhardt, Giovanni Facchini *(On Zoom)*

Sahar Parsa (NYU) - "Mentorship and the Gender Gap in Academia" with Anders Kjelsrud

Block 2: Topics Track

Room 420

Maxine J. Lee (San Francisco State University) -"Transgender Earnings Gaps in the United States: Evidence from Administrative Data" with Christopher S. Carpenter, Lucas Goodman

Josh Martin (Vanderbilt University) - "Same-Sex Partnership Protections, Prohibitions and Child Adoptions" with Zach Rodriguez

Maximilien Bielsa (University of Delaware) - "Another Baby Boom? How Same-Sex Marriage and the Affordable Care Act Increased Births in the US"

12:00 pm -1:00 pm Lunch
Conference Room - 426/428/430

Session 2: Two Parallel Tracks (1:15 - 3:00 PM)

25 minute talk + 10 minute discussion

Block 1: Profession Track

Room 418

Michael Martell (Bard College) - "Queering Economics: Diversity and Inclusion in the Dismal Science" with Leanne Roncolato

Joanna Venator (Boston College) - "The Impacts of Same and Opposite Gender Alumni Speakers on Interest in Economics" with Arpita Patnaik, Gwyn C. Pauley, Matthew J. Wiswall

Xuechao (Jane) Qian (Ball State University) - "Half Empty and Half Full? Women in Economics and thes Rise in Gender-Related Research" with Francisca M. Antman, Kirk B. Doran, Bruce A. Weinberg

Block 2: Topics Track

Room 420

Alessandra Gonzalez (Duke University) - "Firm and Employment Responses to Policy Signals" with Xianglong Kong, and Jennifer R. Peck

Sally Zhang (Tufts University) - "Hidden in Plain Sight: Asymmetric Information and Hidden Income within the Household"

Donn L. Feir (University of Victoria) - Understanding Mental Health Differences Between Cisgender and Gender Minority Youth: Evidence from Within-Family Comparisons

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3:00 pm - 3:15 pm	Break
3:15 pm - 4:15 pm	**Poster Sessions** *Conference Room - 426/428/430*
4:15 pm - 4:30 pm	Break

Panel Session (4:30 - 6:00 PM)

Paths and Perspectives: PhD Economists on Gender and Careers

Conference Room - 426/428/430

Fatima Aqeel (Senior Economist, City of Boston, Planning Department Research Division)

Vittoria Dicandia (Research Economist, Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland)

Dana Rotz (Director of Econometrics, Wizards of the Coast)

Bitsy Perlman (Economist, Center For Economic Studies, U.S. Census Bureau)

Linh T. Tô (Assistant Professor, Boston University)

6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	**Reception + Concluding Remarks** *Conference Room - 426/428/430*

Presentation Abstracts

Anna Stansbury (MIT) - "Class Gap in Career Promotion: Evidence from Academia" with Kyra Rodriguez *(On Zoom)*

Unlike gender or race, class background is rarely a focus of research on career progression, or of DEI efforts in elite occupations. Should it be? In this paper we document a large class gap in career progression in one occupation - US tenure-track academia – using parental education to proxy for class background. First-generation college graduates are 10% less likely to be tenured at an R1, are tenured at institutions ranked 11% lower, earn 3% less, and report 5% lower job satisfaction, than their former PhD classmates (from the same institution and field) with a parent with a non-PhD graduate degree. Neither selection out of academia nor different preferences explain this gap; differential research productivity also plays little role. Instead, likely drivers are differences in cultural and social capital. We also find a class gap in career progression for PhDs who work in industry, suggesting this phenomenon generalizes outside academia.

Valeria Rueda (University of Nottingham) - "How tinted are your glasses? Gender views, beliefs, and recommendations in hiring" with Anna Hochleitner, Fabio Tufano, Markus Eberhardt, Giovanni Facchini *(On Zoom)*

We study gender gaps at different stages of the hiring process, focusing on recommendations and recruitment. First, we document that women receive fewer 'ability' and more 'grindstone' recommendation letters in the academic job market. Next, we conduct two experiments — with academic economists and an online college-educated sample — analyzing both recommendation and recruitment stages. While recruiters overall favor women, consistent with efforts to diversify hiring, some groups of recommenders write suboptimal letters for them, undermining the initial advantage. Finally, letter choices correlate with gender views and are driven by strategic but erroneous beliefs about the effectiveness of different letter types.

Sahar Parsa (NYU) - "Mentorship and the Gender Gap in Academia" with Anders Kjelsrud

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This paper examines how the absence of female professors affects graduates from top-50 U.S. economics Ph.D. programs. We leverage quasi-random variation in sabbatical timing and detailed data on advisor relationships and career outcomes. When a female professor goes on leave, third-year female Ph.D. students become 19 percent less likely to secure academic placements and publish 31 percent fewer early-career papers. Remarkably, male students in the same cohort experience corresponding gains, fully offsetting the losses of their female peers. We parse publication effects from placement outcomes. Treated women continue to publish less even after accounting for placement, while men's publication gains appear entirely driven by improved placement. Gender homophily in mentorship—female students are 51 percent more likely than male students to have female advisors—helps explain these patterns, along with zero-sum dynamics in the junior job market. Adding one senior female professor to each top-50 department would close one-third of the assistant professor gender gap at top-25 schools.

Maxine J. Lee (San Francisco State University) -"Transgender Earnings Gaps in the United States: Evidence from Administrative Data" with Christopher S. Carpenter, Lucas Goodman

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We provide the first evidence on transgender earnings in the US using administrative data on over 55,000 individuals who changed their gender marker with the Social Security Administration and had gender-congruent first name changes on tax records. We validate and describe this sample which exhibits positive selection likely associated with the ability to legally affirm gender. To address selection we estimate transgender earnings gaps using timing variation within-person and variation across siblings and coworkers. All three approaches return evidence of robust transgender earnings penalties of 6-13 log points driven by extensive and intensive margin differences.

Josh Martin (Vanderbilt University) - “Same-Sex Partnership Protections, Prohibitions and Child Adoptions” with Zach Rodriguez

A growing body of literature has documented the positive social and economic impacts of legal same-sex marriage, identifying various contributing mechanisms. We add to this understanding by examining the intermediate steps toward marriage equality—specifically, how same-sex partnership protections and prohibitions affected child adoptions in the United States. Our analysis finds that domestic partnerships and civil unions substantially increased adoptions, while constitutional bans on same-sex marriage had no detectable effect. Heterogeneity analyses highlight two channels of impact: early-reform states with larger same-sex populations experienced greater policy effects, while later-reform states benefited from the relaxation of more restrictive legal constraints.

Maximilien Bielsa (University of Delaware) - "Another Baby Boom? How Same-Sex Marriage and the Affordable Care Act Increased Births in the US"

Assistive Reproductive Treatment clinics use various procedures to help patients facing infertility issues, or same-sex couples, have children. Using CDC Data, I find that in states with ART insurance mandates, the Affordable Care Act caused an increase of 114-119 frozen births per clinic, due to frozen births being the cheapest procedure. Additionally, same-sex marriage legalization boosted frozen donated births by 6-10 births per clinic, and is driven by same-sex couples uptake of ART. However, these effects diminish at the clinic level due to an increase in the number of clinics following these policy changes, and an exhaustion of the demand.

Michael Martell (Bard College) - "Queering Economics: Diversity and Inclusion in the Dismal Science" with Leanne Roncolato

Economics is tremendously influential, and also one of the least diverse and most exclusionary social science disciplines. We argue that economics has created a dangerous hierarchy that deters dissent and marginalizes underrepresented voices, and provide an argument for how

Joanna Venator (Boston College) - "The Impacts of Same and Opposite Gender Alumni Speakers on Interest in Economics" with Arpita Patnaik, Gwyn C. Pauley, Matthew J. Wiswall

This paper evaluates the impact of a series of male and female alumni speaker interventions in introductory microeconomics courses on student interest in economics. Using student-level transcript data, we estimate the effect of speakers in models which use untreated diversification can benefit the field. By highlighting the voices of LGBTQ+ economists, who provide first-person accounts of how the field continues to disadvantage and exclude, we envision a plan for queering economics. We argue that doing so, by making economics inclusive, benefits all of us. Not only will the field benefit from attracting the best and most diverse talent; it will also allow the discipline to better represent the various ways we experience the economy, while promoting prosperity and inclusion for all, especially the most vulnerable.

Xuechao (Jane) Qian (Ball State University) - "Half Empty and Half Full? Women in Economics and the Rise in Gender-Related Research" with Francisca M. Antman, Kirk B. Doran, Bruce A. Weinberg

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Using the EconLit dissertation database and large-scale algorithmic methods that identify author demographics from names, we investigate the connection between the gender of economics dissertators and dissertation topics. Despite stagnation in the share of women among economics Ph.D.s in recent years, there has been a remarkable rise in gender-related dissertations in economics over time and in many sub-fields. Women economists are significantly more likely to write gender-related dissertations and bring gender-related topics into a wide range of fields within economics. Men in economics have also substantially increased their interest in gender-related topics.

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lectures as control groups, including professor and semester-year fixed effects and student-level covariates. Alumni speakers increase intermediate economics course take-up by 1.7-2.1 percentage points (9-12%). Students are more responsive to same-gender speakers, with male speakers increasing men's course take-up by 36-38% and female speakers increasing women's course take-up by 37-40% implying that the effect of alumni speakers is strongly gendered.

Alessandra Gonzalez (Duke University) - "Firm and Employment Responses to Policy Signals" with Xianglong Kong, and Jennifer R. Peck

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Gender and race-based barriers to labor market participation have long been associated with misallocation of talent and capital, with notable impacts on aggregate productivity. We examine the aggregate effects of the 2018 lift of the women's driving ban in Saudi Arabia. We find that firms and workers react to the announcement of the policy very quickly, and that the announcement is associated with increases in employment and the quality of job matches. There is evidence of significant reallocation of workers across firms in response to the policy, with a surge in the share of firms that hire (any) women and increased movement of male and female employees across firms. We develop a framework that examines how the announcement of the elimination of driving restrictions reduces distortions in the labor market, inducing firms to begin hiring women, raising firm efficiency, and increasing employment and wages for women and men.

Sally Zhang (Tufts University) - "Hidden in Plain Sight: Asymmetric Information and Hidden Income within the Household"

Do household members hide employment income from one another? Consistent with income hiding within the household, I find that respondents in Kenya and Indonesia underestimate labor income of other household members, and underreport own income when other household members are present. Households with measured hiding consume more private goods and transfer more to extended families. I develop and test a household model where each member can strategically underreport income, increasing private consumption at the expense of household efficiency. In equilibrium, cooperation is endogenous and incomplete, as household members collectively allocate reported income, but total income is not allocated efficiently.

Donn L. Feir (University of Victoria) - Understanding Mental Health Differences Between Cisgender and Gender Minority Youth: Evidence from Within-Family Comparisons

Prior research has indicated that cisgender individuals experience significant mental health advantages compared to transgender and nonbinary individuals, including among youth. Using data from the 2021 Canadian Census, we document substantial differences—ranging from 30 to 40 percentage points—in the prevalence of mental health conditions between cisgender youths and their gender minority counterparts. These disparities remain significant even after accounting for demographic factors and parental background. Sibling comparisons further reveal that these mental health differences are substantial, indicating that unobserved family background differences cannot fully explain them. In contrast, household factors do eliminate sibling gaps in physical and learning difficulties.

Ira Abraham (Boston College) - *"Optimal benchmark in Medicare Advantage Market"*

This paper studies the optimal design of the county-level benchmark payment for Medicare Advantage (MA) plans in the U.S. health insurance market. Under MA, private insurers receive a capitated, risk-adjusted monthly payment from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) which is based on a benchmark rate. The benchmarks are set to approximate the cost of covering a patient had they instead chosen the alternative Traditional Medicare—the public fee-for-service program administered directly by CMS. Therefore, benchmarks are calculated based on an average medical costs in the TM market. However, there is evidence of advantageous selection into the MA market conditional on risk score. I develop a social-planner's model in which the benchmark influences enrollee sorting between TM and MA, consumer surplus in each regime, and federal expenditures. The planner chooses the benchmark to maximize aggregate welfare—total consumer surplus plus government net budget—holding other program features fixed. Using CMS encounter data on MA market alongside supplementary survey information to measure imperfect risk adjustment, I simulate the welfare implications of alternative benchmark-setting rules. The results show that the selection corrected benchmark increases the total welfare by 38 billion dollars (corresponds to a 10% increase in total welfare).

Laura Aquino (Boston University) - *"Strategic Adaptation to Gender Quotas in Mexican Local Politics"*

Mexico approved a major constitutional reform in 2014 that established a fifty percent gender quota requirement for candidates for municipal president. We exploit time and spatial variation to analyze its effects on women's representation. Using a differences-in-differences methodology, we show that parity rules had an immediate and significant effect on the number of women elected as municipal executives. These gains are lasting, but full parity is not reached, in part due to strategic behavior by political parties. To explain this, we develop a theoretical model in which parties maximize electoral payoffs under quota constraints. The model predicts that women will be disproportionately assigned to low political stakes districts. We test these predictions using novel candidate-level nomination data linked to municipal characteristics and prior electoral margins. Our empirical findings are consistent with the model and show that, to achieve real political inclusion, legal reforms must anticipate party adaptation.

Aanchal Bagga (Tufts University)

"Behind Closed Doors: Husbands, In-Laws, and Maternal Health in India"

Jijeebisha Bhattarai (Binghamton University)

"From Prohibition to Choice: Abortion Legalization and Child Investments in Nepal"

We study the effects of abortion legalization on fertility behavior and child investments in Nepal. In 2002, the country reformed one of the world's most restrictive abortion laws, which had fully prohibited pregnancy terminations and subjected women to prosecution and imprisonment. Exploiting quasi-random variation in the sex of the firstborn child, we estimate how the reform shaped family size, breastfeeding, vaccination, and child survival. Legalization substantially reduced son-biased fertility stopping, narrowing sibship-size disparities between firstborn-girl and firstborn-boy families by nearly three-quarters. It also closed much of the pre-existing gender gap in breastfeeding duration, consistent with reduced reliance on breastfeeding as a fertility-spacing tool. By contrast, effects on vaccinations and survival were limited, reflecting that these inputs were less closely tied to fertility behavior. These findings show that abortion access relaxed fertility constraints and altered investments linked to fertility timing, while broader forms of gender inequality persisted. The results extend the literature on the quantity–quality trade-off by showing how reproductive autonomy interacts with cultural preferences to shape fertility and child well-being.

In rural India, deeply ingrained social norms often restrict fathers' involvement in maternal health, limiting support for expectant mothers and contributing to suboptimal health outcomes. This study introduces an intervention designed to increase paternal engagement through information dissemination and targeted training. We hypothesize that low paternal involvement is driven by pluralistic ignorance—a misperception of societal norms that leads individuals to conform to behaviors they mistakenly believe are widely accepted. Specifically, we define pluralistic ignorance as fathers incorrectly assuming that other fathers or their own mothers disapprove of their participation in maternal and newborn health decisions. To test this hypothesis, we employ a randomized controlled trial (RCT) with a 2×2 factorial design to assess the independent and combined effects of structured training and information provision on fathers' participation in maternal healthcare. Primary Health Centers (PHCs) will be randomly assigned to one of four groups: Training Only (T1), Training with Subsidy (T2), Training with Misperception Correction (T3), and Training with Subsidy and Misperception Correction (T4). Additionally, to isolate the impact of financial constraints, we will randomize subsidies for training attendance within one of the treatment branches while maintaining an open invitation for all men to participate.
By integrating insights from behavioral economics, gender norms, and health decision-making, this study explores how addressing misperceptions, reducing financial barriers, and providing targeted

Lily Seitelman (Boston University)

"The Gendered Effects of Work-from-Home on Spousal Labor Market Outcomes"

The ability to work from home (WFH) has reshaped job opportunities, work-life balance [Bloom 2015; Cullen 2025; Barrero 2021], and time use at home and in the office [Schüller 2025; Lyttelton 2022]. Research has yet to examine how a spouse's WFH options influence their partner's labor market outcomes. While some studies explore the gendered effects of WFH on employment and earnings [Farooqi 2023; Harrington 2023], they do not address spousal dynamics, nor do they address how firm level shocks affect these dynamics. Using an event study design we investigate how an exogenous shift in a spouse's ability to work from home affects labor force participation, earnings, hours worked, and job-switching likelihood of their partner. We also explore variations by gender and life cycle stage.

Danielle Graves Williamson (Boston University)

"Southern Academies: The Proliferation of All-White Private Schools After Brown and Their Legacy for Students"

We examine the consequences of White backlash to the public school integration movement. White segregationists responded to the erosion of the de jure

training can enhance paternal involvement in maternal health.

Anwesha Bhattacharya (Harvard University)

"Care on Campus: Understanding and Responding to Student Wellbeing in India"

Mental health challenges are rising sharply among Indian college students, yet formal care-seeking remains rare, especially for young women. In this setting, the share of students experiencing depression, anxiety, and loneliness is comparable to that of US undergraduates. However, a significant gap remains in care-seeking and willingness to seek care compared to their US peers. Gender disparities are stark: women are more likely to report depression, and gaps are wider for anxiety and loneliness. In a broader online survey (N=438), over 60% reported distress, but only 22% had accessed therapy. These outcomes reflect both demand-side barriers of stigma and fear of therapy and structural constraints like conservative gender norms and early marriage expectations. Importantly, those who had never sought therapy were more likely to stigmatize help-seeking: in a discrete choice experiment, they were less likely to choose peers who disclosed a mental health appointment. In response, we are developing MindMitra, a culturally grounded, bilingual mental well-being conversation bot co-designed with Indian practitioners to offer a no-cost, low-friction entry point to care. We will test it via a randomized controlled trial across 12 public colleges to evaluate whether AI tools can racial hierarchy by organizing private academies to enforce de facto segregation. We create a novel data set to describe the growth of these schools, identifying over 650 schools established in the 1960s and 70s in the Southeastern United States. We estimate that the establishment of a segregation academy causes large and persistent declines in White public school enrollment, decreases public school integration, and erodes local and state funding for public education. However, federal funding backstopped these declines; ultimately, per pupil public school funding increased for remaining public school students. To measure the long-run impacts on educational attainment and employment, we combine our data set of segregation academies with large-scale restricted survey and administrative data. Using a cohort identification strategy, we find no effects on the educational attainment and employment outcomes of Black students, but negative effects on White students. This evidence suggests White families may have sacrificed educational quality in order to maintain racial segregation.

Jiaqi Wang (University of Miami)

“Credit Constraints, Housing Affordability, and Insurance Shocks: Evidence from Hurricane Irma in Florida”

Housing affordability in Florida has deteriorated sharply as rising homeowners insurance costs increasingly rival mortgage payments. This project studies how increase engagement, reduce stigma, and improve academic and life outcomes.

Abigail Dow (Boston University)

“The Price of Parenthood: Childcare Costs and Fertility”

Across the developed world, fertility rates have fallen below replacement level, raising concerns over shrinking workforces and aging populations. In the U.S., the rate has fallen to a historic low, and potential parents cite financial constraints as a barrier to having children. A substantial and early cost for parents is childcare. This paper studies how childcare prices shape fertility decisions - whether to have children, when to have them, and how many to have. Using an instrumental variables approach that exploits state-level regulations that effectively shift the price of childcare, I find that higher prices reduce birth rates, delay first births, and lengthen the interval between first and second births. A 10% increase in the price of childcare leads to a 5.7% decrease in the birth rate, or 4 births per 1000 women. Declines are largest amongst women aged 30 and above, which can be partly explained by reductions in second and third births. I propose a theoretical model to further explain the age gradient: older women earning higher wages face a greater opportunity cost of their time and thus outsource childcare, making them more sensitive to its price. Consistent with the model's predictions, I show that older parents spend more on formal childcare, and that more educated women (with higher incomes) exhibit larger price responses.

disaster-driven insurance shocks interact with household credit constraints to affect affordability, financial outcomes, and tenure decisions. I exploit Hurricane Irma's 2017 landfall as a natural experiment. The storm caused over $50 billion in damage and triggered sustained insurance premium hikes across Florida. Using a difference-in-differences design, I compare heavily impacted counties (e.g., Monroe, Collier, Lee, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach) with less-impacted controls (e.g., Levy, Putnam, St. Johns, Nassau, Duval). Insurance premium data from the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation will be merged with Experian credit scores, HMDA mortgage originations, and financial outcomes such as delinquencies and bankruptcies. The analysis emphasizes heterogeneity: whether lower-credit-score households were more vulnerable to Irma-driven premium increases. To complement this, I build a heterogeneous-agent two-asset model where households hold liquid savings and housing. Credit scores determine borrowing capacity, while insurance shocks raise the effective cost of ownership. The model highlights affordability and substitution channels: higher insurance costs tighten constraints, reduce homeownership among marginal households, and increase rental demand. Policy counterfactuals include insurance subsidies, FHA access expansions, and credit score improvements. This combined empirical–theoretical approach provides new insights into how climate-driven insurance shocks reinforce inequality and reshape housing markets.

Qingyan Luo (Boston University)

"Who Reacts First? Measuring ETF vs. Stock Price Discovery under Macro Shocks"

This paper examines the price discovery process between ETFs and their underlying constituent stocks during major macroeconomic information events. Using high-frequency minute-level data around FOMC announcements, CPI releases, and geopolitical shocks, I construct a Relative Adjustment Speed Index (RASI) that measures the relative speed of price adjustment between ETFs and value-weighted constituent portfolios. I find that ETFs consistently lead price discovery during macro shocks, with the lead-lag relationship intensifying during periods of high market stress and information uncertainty. In contrast, during firm-specific earnings announcements, constituent stocks tend to lead. These findings suggest a conditional structure of information leadership and highlight the role of ETFs as macro information aggregators.

Luwen Mai (Boston University)

"For Better or For Worse: The Added Worker Effect in the 21st Century U.S."

The average Added Worker Effect (AWE) in the United States appears small. This paper shows that such muted estimates mask substantial heterogeneity across the life

Manchun Wang (Boston College)

"Endogenous Supplier Sourcing under Supply Chain Risk and Its Macro Implication"

This paper studies the effects of delivery risk on how firms organize their supply chains and the resulting aggregate impact. With granular supply chain relationship dataset, I find evidence that firms choose to diversify their supplier sourcing when faced with delivery delay, opting for safer suppliers to stabilize the output, even if these suppliers are less productive and involve higher relationship-building costs. While this restructuring helps stabilize output and reduce volatility, it comes at the cost of elevated production cost, creating a fundamental trade-off. To rationalize these findings and investigate the aggregate impact, I introduce the delivery risk into a general equilibrium model with endogenous supplier sourcing. The model shows that in environments with aggregate delivery risk, firms' precautionary responses can enhance stability, but at the cost of sustaining higher equilibrium prices and lower output - even when no actual disruptions occur. The possibility of delivery delays drives costly defensive behavior that reduces aggregate efficiency. These results indicate that economies exposed to heightened supply chain risks may face persistently higher price levels and weaker real output - even in the absence of actual disruptions - as firms collectively adopt defensive sourcing strategies that reduce efficiency.

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cycle and household structures. Using newly linked restricted administrative and census data from 2000--2022, I exploit mass-layoff events as exogenous shocks to identify involuntary job loss and its impact on spousal labor supply. Event study and matched difference-in-difference estimates reveal that younger spouses with children increase employment and earnings in response to displacement, consistent with a financially motivated AWE. In contrast, childless young female spouses often reduce labor supply, particularly when both partners work in the same industry, reflecting a "trailing spouse" dynamic. Among older couples, job displacement accelerates joint labor market exit, consistent with coordinated retirement. These findings highlight the role of age, parental status, and joint career dynamics in shaping household labor supply responses to job loss, and help reconcile why aggregate AWE estimates in high-income countries are small despite strong responses among population subgroups.

Yuzhi Yao (Boston College)

“School Choice, Teacher Access, and Student Outcomes”

This paper examines how income-based joint sorting, a process in which students and teachers jointly sort into high-income students, contributes to inequality in teacher access and student outcomes. By exploiting the expansion of charter schools in North Carolina, I first document the sorting responses of students and teachers at nearby public schools. The opening of a charter school with 500 seats is associated with a 0.023 s.d. reduction in teacher value-added and a 3.15 percentage point increase in the share of low-income students at nearby low-income public schools, while the average effects among all public schools are modest. Motivated by this, I develop and estimate a model that incorporates schools' hiring decisions, teachers' job decisions, and students' school choices, accommodating the equilibrium effects of joint sorting driven by student income composition. A decomposition analysis reveals that the income-based joint sorting of teachers and high-income white students widens the income achievement gap by 0.01 s.d. (on the standardized test score distribution), equivalent to approximately $4,048 lifetime earnings gap between high- and low-income students. By simulating an entry wave of charter schools, I show that the income achievement gap increases by 0.002 s.d. post-entry. However, policies aimed at improving access to charter schools for low-income students, including relocating charter schools to low-income areas and offering school bus services, effectively mitigate the increased outcome inequality.