

Aman Desai

PhD Program in Economics
365 Fifth Avenue, New York
NY, USA, 10016

Email: adesai@gradcenter.cuny.edu
Cell: (+1) 716-903-7787
Website: amandesai.com

EDUCATION

Expected 2025	PhD in Economics, CUNY Graduate Center
2018	MS in Econometrics and Quantitative Economics, SUNY at Buffalo
2015	Diploma for Graduates in Economics, University of London International Programmes
2014	BTech in Civil Engineering, Gujarat Technological University

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Labor Economics, Applied Micro-econometrics, Machine Learning in Social Science

JOB MARKET PAPER

Measuring Income Inequality of Opportunity: Accounting for Dynamic Complementarity

Abstract : The egalitarian principle of justice attributes life success to two main factors: circumstances beyond an individual's control and personal effort within it. Roemer's equality of opportunity concept proposes compensating individuals for inequalities arising from unequal circumstances. Dynamic complementarity in skill formation suggests that early childhood skill gaps often persist into adulthood, leading to unequal outcomes. Using PSID data, I classify all measurable factors before the age of majority at 18 as circumstances, creating sets based on critical childhood stages to account for dynamic complementarity. My findings show that over 40% of total income inequality can be attributed to inequality of opportunity before adulthood. Moreover, nearly one-third of total income inequality stems from circumstances faced by individuals at or before age five. Using circumstances identified as important through a random forest—a supervised machine learning model—based on permutation-based importance scores, I estimate the lower bound of inequality of opportunity's share in total inequality before the age of majority to be about 32%. These results underscore the importance of considering childhood circumstances when measuring inequality of opportunity.

WORKING PAPERS

Impact of COVID-19 on Student Performance: Using Exam Level Data from a Public College in NYC, with Theodore Joyce

Abstract : We analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on undergraduates' performance in an introductory economics course at a large public university. One challenge in analyzing student academic outcomes during the pandemic was the explicit change in grading policies by college administrators as well as the implicit adjustment by faculty designed to mitigate the impact of an abrupt shift to online learning amidst the stress and uncertainty associated with the pandemic. To limit the impact of grading policies we analyze changes in the raw scores on a common final administered to all sections of the course the year before and for four semesters after the spring of 2020. To limit variation in the difficulty of the exams from before to during the pandemic, we compare student performance on nearly identical questions on the final exam overtime. Adjusted mean scores on the common final fell by 0.6 points and the probability of answering the qualitatively same question on the final fell, on average, by 5.7 percentage points. Students with lower GPAs were 4.3 percentage points less likely to answer similar questions correctly relative to students with higher GPAs during the pandemic.

Measuring the Educational Inequality of Opportunity using Early Childhood Circumstances (work in progress)

FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

2023-2024	Junior Scholar Award, Stone Center on Socio-Economic Inequality, NYC, New York
2022	Open Pedagogy Fellowship, Mina Rees Library, CUNY Graduate Center
2018-2023	Graduate Center Fellowship, CUNY Graduate Center

SEMINARS/CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2025	Eastern Economic Association Conference, NYC, New York
2024	Global GLO-JOPE Conference (online)
2024	Stone Center Multidisciplinary Seminar Series, NYC, New York
2024	PSID Annual User Conference, Ann Arbor, Michigan
2024	Dissertation Seminar in Economics, CUNY Graduate Center, NYC, New York
2023	Dissertation Seminar in Economics, CUNY Graduate Center, NYC, New York

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Lecturer

2022-present	ECO 4000 Statistical Analysis for Economics and Finance, Baruch College
2021-present	ECO 1002 Macroeconomics, Baruch College
2019-2022	ECO 1001 Current Economic Problems, Baruch College
2019-2020	BUSN 3400 Introduction to Economics and Business Statistics, Brooklyn College

Teaching Assistant

2019-2022	ECO 4100 Applied Micro-Econometrics, Dr. Theodore Joyce, Baruch College
2017	ECO 407 Macroeconomic Theory, Dr. James Holmes, SUNY at Buffalo

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2023	Research Assistant to Dr. Theodore Joyce, Research Foundation, CUNY
2022	Research Assistant to Dr. Rafia Zafar, Stone Center on Socio-Economic Inequality
2019-2022	Research Assistant to Dr. Miles Corak, Stone Center on Socio-Economic Inequality

WORKSHOPS

2024	Inequality by Numbers, Stone Center on Socio-Economic Inequality, NYC, New York
2023	Machine Learning and Heterogeneous Effects, by Brigham Frandsen (online)
2023	Machine Learning and Causal Inference, by Brigham Frandsen (online)
2022	Causal Inference Mixtape II, by Scott Cunningham (online)
2022	Causal Inference Mixtape I, by Scott Cunningham (online)
2022	PSID Data User Workshop, Ann Arbor, Michigan

SOFTWARE SKILLS

R, Stata, Python, MS-Excel, Latex

LANGUAGES

English (proficient), Hindi (fluent), Gujarati (native)

REFERENCES

Dr. Miles Corak (Advisor)
Professor of Economics
PhD Program in Economics
CUNY Graduate Center
Email : mcorak@gc.cuny.edu

Dr. Theodore Joyce
Professor of Economics
Zicklin School of Business
Baruch College
Email : theodore.joyce@baruch.cuny.edu

Dr. Lilia Maliar
Professor of Economics
PhD Program in Economics
CUNY Graduate Center
Email : lmaliar@gc.cuny.edu

Dr. Wim Vijverberg
Professor of Economics
PhD Program in Economics
CUNY Graduate Center
Email : wvijverberg@gc.cuny.edu