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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Economics (expected)	The Pennsylvania State University (PSU)	2022
M.A. in Economics (<i>Summa Cum Laude</i>)	International School of Economics at TSU (ISET)	2012
B.A. in Social and Political Sciences (<i>Honours</i>)	Tbilisi State University (TSU)	2010

ACADEMIC RESEARCH

INTERESTS: Development Economics, Education Economics, Applied Econometrics, Applied Microeconomics

ADVISORS: Professor Kala Krishna (advisor) and Professor Michael Gechter (co-advisor)

RESEARCH PAPERS:

Depth versus Breadth: Field Specialization in High School (Job Market Paper)

Abstract: The timing of human capital specialization varies considerably across the world. While early specialization leads to depth in field-specific knowledge, late specialization may help students find which field they like by maintaining exposure to a greater breadth of options. This paper quantifies the change in student welfare when switching from a depth-oriented to a breadth-oriented system. To do so, I leverage a policy experiment in the country of Georgia. The policy imposed generalist high school (HS) graduation exams and forced the students to generalize more than they used to. Compared to the pilot cohort, the cohort that began HS with advance notice of the policy demonstrated broader subject knowledge, applied to more diverse fields in college, and was subject to changing competition for college programs across fields. To quantify the welfare impact of the policy, I develop and estimate a dynamic structural model of gradual specialization in HS. The key ingredients of the model are endogenous skill formation, field match uncertainty, and learning by experimentation. Policy simulations with estimated parameters and observed changes in competition across fields indicate that the policy increased average HS graduate welfare by at most an amount equivalent to 0.6% of the present discounted value of average wages. However, policy welfare effects are not uniform: students with higher general academic ability enjoy moderate utility gains but students with lower general academic ability experience significant losses.

Learning with Retaking: A New Semi-parametric Selection Correction and Panel Data Evidence

Abstract: I investigate whether learning by college admission exam retakers reduces the initial socio-economic skill gap between applicants. I estimate learning for urban and rural retakers in the country of Georgia using rich administrative panel data and a novel semi-parametric estimator. The proposed three-step estimator is robust to self-selection on latent skills and test measurement error into retaking. Furthermore, the estimator attains much greater precision than conventional two-step correction methods by using data on multiple test scores per applicant. I find no evidence of catch-up, emphasizing the context- and method-dependence of previous conclusions about the background-neutralizing nature of retaking.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Lecturer, Undergraduate Principles of Economics, University of Georgia, Georgia	2013-2016
Lecturer, Undergraduate Econometrics, International Black Sea University, Georgia	2014
Teaching Assistant, Undergraduate Principles of Economics, TSU, Georgia	2012-2013
Teaching Assistant, Graduate Macroeconomics, ISET, Georgia	2011
Teaching Assistant, Graduate Mathematics for Economists, ISET, Georgia	2010

PROJECTS AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Graduate Research Assistant for Professor Kala Krishna, PSU, USA	2019-2022
Graduate Research Assistant for Professor Michael Gechter, PSU, USA	2017-2019
Senior Researcher/Analyst, ISET Policy Institute, Georgia	2012-2016
Intern, National Bank of Georgia, Georgia	2011

HONORS AND AWARDS

Rosenberg Liberal Arts Centennial Scholarship, PSU, USA	2019
Teaching Fellowship, CERGE-EI Foundation	2012-2016
Sergey Mergelyan Award, Armenian Economic Association, Armenia	2012
Award for Outstanding Intellectual Contribution and Future Leader Scholarship, ISET, Georgia	2012
Presidential Stipend, TSU, Georgia	2007-2010

CONFERENCE AND SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS

Indian Statistical Institute 16th Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development (virtual)	2021
PSU Applied Microeconomics Seminar (University Park, PA)	2021
Midwest Economics Association Annual Meeting (virtual)	2021
Young Economists Symposium (virtual)	2020
Trade and Development, IO, Education and Women's Workshops (University Park, PA)	2018-2021
Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland (Lugano, Switzerland)	2016
Global Development Network (Manila, Philippines)	2013
Armenian Economic Association (Yerevan, Armenia)	2012

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Organizer, PSU Economics of Education Seminar and Reading Group, University Park, PA	2020-2021
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SELECTED POLICY RESEARCH

“Population Situation Analysis: Georgia 2014” for UNFPA with Nata Avaliani, Ralph Hakkert, Eduard Jongstra, Gulnara Kadyrkulova, Lasha Labadze and Maka Chitanava	2015
“Vocational Training for Job Seekers in Georgia” for the World Bank with Florian Biermann, Robizon Khubulashvili, Lasha Labadze and Eric Livny	2014
“Pilot Regulatory Impact Assessment on Draft Code on Spatial Planning and Construction” for USAID with Maka Chitanava, Norberto Pignatti and Giorgi Tsutskiridze	2014
“Report on Regional Disparities in Georgia” for EU with Michael Fuenfzig, Irakli Galdava, Giorgi Kelbakiani and Givi Melkadze	2013
“Fiscal Implications of Local Self-Government Reform in Georgia” for USAID with Florian Biermann, Giorgi Kelbakiani and Giorgi Machavariani	2013
“Comprehensive Costing and Finance Strategies for Early Learning System in Georgia” for UNICEF with Eric Livny and Maka Chitanava	2012

SKILLS

Economics: structural estimation, causal inference, quantitative economic modelling
Teaching: Online Teaching Certificate (PSU World Campus, 2017)
Languages: Georgian (native), English (fluent), Russian (intermediate), German (basic)
Programming: Linux, high performance computing, Matlab, Stata, ArcGIS, Python, R, Git, L^AT_EX

REFERENCES

Kala Krishna (advisor) Liberal Arts Professor of Economics PSU Phone: (+1) 814-867-7815 Email: kmk4@psu.edu	Michael Gechter (co-advisor) Assistant Professor of Economics PSU Phone: (+1) 617-775-4059 Email: mdg5396@psu.edu	Keisuke Hirano Professor of Economics PSU (+1) 814-867-3312 Email: kuh237@psu.edu
Jonathan Eaton Distinguished Professor of Economics PSU Phone: (+1) 814-867-3297 Email: jxe22@psu.edu	Andres Aradillas-Lopez Associate Professor of Economics PSU Phone: (+1) 814-863-2157 Email: aza12@psu.edu	