Comment on:

Knocking on the Glass Door: Differential Entry to Graduate Jobs

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WEEP 2025

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Motivation

- Research question:
  - Are individuals from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds less likely to (i) apply for positions, and (ii) make it through the screening process?
- Why is this an important question?
  - Bias against disadvantaged individuals can contribute to (long-term) career development and thereby inequality
  - Optimal allocation of workers to firms
- Data and method
  - Controlled setting: detailed data to traineeships in 17 large firms (UK) including data on applicants' family background (!)
  - University graduate data serves as benchmark for potential applicants' pool
  - Method: OLS regressions controlling for background characteristics (+probit/logit)

Questions and comments

- Key result: Disadvantaged applicants are more likely to apply
  - Once individuals applied, tracking is straightforward
  - But: how well can applicant pool be mapped to applications?
  - Graduates $t - 2$ serve as population:
    - Are these the typical applicants in terms of degrees?
    - Sorting into firms/occupations? Application timing (wait years)
    - Other reasons to assume that pool changes (graduate studies? pandemic?)
    - Keep types of jobs / demands constant; exclude internships?
- Mechanisms: difficult to pin down
  - Bias against disadvantaged individuals (statistical discrimination)
  - Application behavior (risk spreading, information)
  - How comparable are applicants from different socio-economic groups?
  - Story of "employer learning" about (non-) cognitive skills
  - Other?
- Yet: important to document these patterns