

TIM DE SILVA

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EDUCATION

2024*	Ph.D. in Management (Economics, Finance, & Accounting Area) (* = expected) MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, SLOAN SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT <i>Dissertation Committee:</i> Jonathan A. Parker (co-chair), David Thesmar (co-chair), Taha Choukhmane, Lawrence D.W. Schmidt, Eric C. So
2021	M.S. in Management MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, SLOAN SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
2018	B.A. in Financial Economics and Applied Mathematics (Dual Major), <i>magna cum laude</i> CLAREMONT MCKENNA COLLEGE <i>Thesis Supervisor:</i> Fan Yu
2015	Summer Program in Economic Statistics THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Household Finance, Macro-Finance, Asset Pricing, Behavioral Economics, Public Finance

OTHER AFFILIATIONS

2022-2023	Visiting Researcher, Australian National University <i>Sponsors:</i> Nicholas Biddle, Andrew Norton
2022-2024	Honorary Appointment, University of Technology Sydney <i>Sponsor:</i> Anna Bedford

JOB MARKET PAPER

1. “Financing Risky Higher Education: Insurance vs. Incentives in Income-Contingent Loans”

Abstract: This paper studies the design of government-provided financing contracts for higher education. Using policy variation and administrative data from the Australian student loan system, I show individuals reduce their labor supply to minimize repayments on income-contingent loans. I estimate a structural model targeting this variation and find the two primary drivers of these responses are borrowing constraints and fixed adjustment costs in labor supply. In the model, income-contingent loans generate a welfare gain relative to standard debt contracts equivalent to 2% of lifetime consumption, even after taking into account the fiscal costs created by labor supply responses. Most of this welfare gain comes from smoothing payments across dates rather than states, so age-dependent contracts provide closely approximate to first-best.

WORKING PAPERS

2. “Noise in Expectations: Evidence from Analyst Forecasts” with David Thesmar

Revise and Resubmit at the *Review of Financial Studies* (2nd Round)

Abstract: Analyst forecasts outperform statistical forecasts in the short run, but underperform in the long run. We develop a framework to decompose these differences in forecasting accuracy into differences in information, forecast bias, and forecast noise. Noise and bias strongly increase with the horizon, while analyst information advantage decreases very fast. Quantitatively, this generates a reversal in the sign of the Coibion and Gorodnichenko (2015) regression coefficient at long horizons, independently of overreaction/underreaction. Finally, we show a parsimonious model with bounded rationality and a noisy cognitive default à la Patton and Timmermann (2010) jointly matches the term structures of noise and bias.

3. “What Drives Investors’ Portfolio Choices? Separating Risk Preferences from Frictions” with Taha Choukhmane

Revise and Resubmit at the *Journal of Finance*

Abstract: We study the role of risk preferences and frictions in portfolio choice using variation in 401(k) default investment options. Patterns of active choice in response to different default funds imply that, absent participation frictions, 94% of investors prefer holding stocks, with an equity share of retirement wealth declining with age—patterns markedly different from their observed allocations. We use this quasi-experiment to estimate a lifecycle model and find relative risk aversion of 2, EIS of 0.4, and a \$200 portfolio adjustment cost. Our results suggest low stock-market participation is due to participation frictions rather than non-standard preferences such as loss-aversion.

4. “Losing is Optional: Retail Option Trading and Expected Announcement Volatility” with Eric C. So and Kevin C. Smith

Abstract: We document the growth of retail options trading and provide evidence that retail investors are drawn to options by anticipated spikes in volatility. Retail investors purchase options in a concentrated fashion before earnings announcements, particularly those with greater expected abnormal volatility. Comparing across asset markets, we also find retail investors disproportionately trade options over stocks as anticipated announcement volatility increases. In doing so, retail investors display a trio of wealth-depleting behaviors: they overpay for options relative to realized volatility, incur enormous bid-ask spreads, and sluggishly respond to announcements. These translate to retail losses of 5-to-9% on average, and 10-to-14% for high expected volatility announcements.

WORK IN PROGRESS

5. “Selective Inattention” with Pierfrancesco Mei

Abstract: We study how households form macro expectations around major decisions, such as purchasing a house. Using a comprehensive set of household surveys from the US and Europe, including recently released micro data from the ECB and the European Commission, we analyze households’ attention to macro variables using their (i) forecast errors and (ii) forecast deviations from professional forecasters. We find households’ attention to macro variables significantly improves around big decisions, especially those of lower-income and less-educated households. We conclude by discussing possible implications of this wedge between average and aggregate inattention.

6. “DGP-Agnostic Dynamic Programming via Reinforcement Learning” with Marc de la Barrera
7. “Optimal Default Asset Allocations with Choice Frictions” with Taha Choukhmane

PUBLICATIONS

8. “Are Volatility Expectations in Different Countries Interdependent? A Data-Driven Solution to Structural VAR Identification for Implied Equity Volatility Indices” *Undergraduate Economic Review*, Vol. 14(1), 2017.
 - Winner of Claremont McKenna College *Best Senior Thesis in Financial Economics*
9. “Is Google Search Behavior Related to Volatility? Incorporating Google Trends Data into a GARCH Model for Equity Volatility” *Undergraduate Economic Review*, Vol. 13(1), 2016.

SOFTWARE PACKAGES

nndp	Dynamic Programming with Neural Networks (joint with Marc de la Barrera) Source code: GitHub , PyPi
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INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

2017	Institutional Equity Derivatives Trading and Research, Morgan Stanley
2016	Quantitative Investment Researcher, Analytic Investors
2016-2018	Director, Claremont Consulting Group
2015-2016	Lead Consultant, Claremont Consulting Group

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2021-2022	Research Assistant for Professor Taha Choukhmane
2020	Research Assistant for Professor Eric C. So
2018-2019	Research Assistant for Professor Eben Lazarus
2016	Research Assistant at the Lowe Institute of Political Economy

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Fall 2022	TA for 15.425: Corporate Finance (MFin) Professor David Thesmar, MIT Sloan Rating: Mean = 5.3/7, Median = 6/7
Spring 2022	TA for 15.453: Finance Lab (MFin) Professors Gita Rao and Bhushan Vartak, MIT Sloan Rating: Mean = 6.7/7, Median = 7/7
Spring 2022	TA for 15.539: PhD Seminar in Empirical Methods (PhD) Professors Eric C. So and Charles C.Y. Wang, MIT Sloan Rating: Mean = 7/7, Median = 7/7
Summer 2020	TA for 15.511: Financial Accounting (Sloan Fellows MBA) Professor Bala Dharan, MIT Sloan Rating: Mean = 6.3/7, Median = 7/7
Summer 2019	TA for 15.511: Financial Accounting (Sloan Fellows MBA) Professor Joe Weber, MIT Sloan Rating: Mean = 5.9/7, Median = 6/7
Spring 2018	TA for ECON101: Intermediate Microeconomics (undergraduate) Professor Saman Olfati, Claremont McKenna College Rating: N/A

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2023	American Finance Association Annual Meeting*
2022	NBER Behavioral Finance Spring Working Group Meeting*, CEPR Seventh European Workshop on Household Finance*, Western Finance Association Meeting, Society for Economic Dynamics Annual Meeting*, European Finance Association Annual Meeting*, Northern Finance Association Annual Meeting*, Texas Finance Festival*, BSE PhD Workshop on Expectations in Macroeconomics, Miami Behavioral Finance Conference*
2021	Transatlantic Doctoral Conference, SoFiE Annual Conference
2020	Stanford GSB Rising Scholars Conference
	(includes scheduled, * = presentation by co-author)

SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS

2023	Australian National University, MIT Sloan (x2), MIT Economics, Inter-Finance PhD Seminar
2022	MIT Sloan (x4), MIT Economics, Quantbot Technologies, Inter-Finance PhD Seminar
2021	MIT Sloan (x2) , MIT Economics (x2)
2020	MIT Sloan (x2)
2019	MIT Sloan
	(includes scheduled)

INVITED PARTICIPATION

2022	NBER Behavioral Macroeconomics Research Bootcamp (Berkeley Haas), Yale Summer School in Behavioral Finance (Yale SOM), MFR Summer Session for Young Scholars (Chicago), MFR Workshop on the Financial Economics of Insurance (Chicago)
2021	Mitsui Summer School on Structural Estimation in Corporate Finance (Michigan Ross)
2019	Big Data Analytics for Accounting Research (MIT Sloan)

FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS, AND GRANTS

2023	NBER Household Finance Grant, Mark Kritzman and Elizabeth Gorman Finance PhD Research Fund, Stone Finance PhD Fund, Thomas Anthony Pappas Endowed Scholarship Fund
2022	Mark Kritzman and Elizabeth Gorman Research Fund (joint with Taha Choukhmane)
2018-2024	MIT Sloan PhD Fellowship
2018	Phi Beta Kappa, Robert Day School BA Scholar, International Honor Society of Economics (Omicron Delta Epsilon), Best Senior in Economics, Best Senior Thesis in Financial Economics, Dean's List (Top 15%)
2016	Best Sophomore in Economics, Athletic Director's Honor Roll
2015	Athletic Director's Honor Roll

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Referee *Quarterly Journal of Economics, Review of Economics and Statistics, Management Science, Journal of Financial Econometrics, Journal of Accounting and Economics*

SKILLS

Software PYTHON, FORTRAN, OPENMP, MPI, GIT, BASH, SLURM, R, SAS, STATA, BLOOMBERG
TERMINAL, GOOGLE ANALYTICS, ~~ETX~~

Languages English (native), Spanish (beginner)

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Auto Racing *Team USA Scholarship* Nominee (2015), *Team USA Scholarship* Finalist (2016), 5x Formula 2000 Track Record Holder (2016-2017), Pacific F2000 Pro Series Champion (2016), *Mazda Road to Indy \$250,000 Shootout* Competitor (2016), *Motorsports Magazine* Silverstone Classic Driver of the Weekend (2022)

Golf Ocean League Conference Individual Champion (2012, 2014), NCAA Division III National Team Champion (2016)

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Born: June 21st, 1996. Ethnicity: Sri Lankan, White. Citizenship: USA.