

# Ihsaan Bassier

Centre for Economic Performance  
London School of Economics and Political Science  
London, WC2A 2AE, UK

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Email : [i.bassier@lse.ac.uk](mailto:i.bassier@lse.ac.uk)  
Mobile: +44 7587 933 976

## REFERENCES

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- Professor Arindrajit Dube: University of Massachusetts, Amherst  
Department of Economics, email: [adube@econs.umass.edu](mailto:adube@econs.umass.edu)
- Professor Alan Manning: London School of Economics and Political Science  
Department of Economics and Centre for Economic Performance, email: [a.manning@lse.ac.uk](mailto:a.manning@lse.ac.uk)
- Professor Suresh Naidu: Columbia University  
Department of Economics and School of International and Public Affairs, email: [sn2430@columbia.edu](mailto:sn2430@columbia.edu)

## RESEARCH APPOINTMENTS

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- Postdoctoral Research Officer, Center for Economic Performance, London School of Economics: *Sept. 2022-2024*.  
Working with Prof. Alan Manning on projects related to monopsonistic competition, with applications in the UK.
- Research affiliate, Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town: *March 2020-*.  
Policy research and collaboration on the labour market and social grants system in South Africa.
- Research Assistant to Prof. Arindrajit Dube, University of Massachusetts, Amherst: *Sept. 2018-2022*.  
Empirical work on minimum wages and monopsony power mainly using administrative data from the US.

## RESEARCH

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### Primary field: Labour

- Secondary field: Development
- Interests: Monopsonistic Competition; Collective Bargaining and Unions; Income and Group Inequality; Poverty.

### Academic works

#### *Selected peer-reviewed publications*

- “Firms and Inequality When Unemployment is High”: *Journal of Development Economics*. Using matched employer-employee data from South Africa, I find that firms explain a larger share of wage variation than in richer countries. This may be driven by higher firm productivity dispersion, as well as monopsony power related to high unemployment. Such firm-level competitive dynamics may exacerbate inequality in developing countries more generally. See: [Bassier \(2023\)](#). Media piece in *The Conversation*.
- “Monopsony in Movers: The Elasticity of Labor Supply to Firm Wage Policies”: *Journal of Human Resources*. Using Oregon employer-employee data, we compare matched workers leaving the same firm in the same quarter, and test how their separation time responds to their new firm wages. The implied firm-level labor supply elasticities are around 4. See: [Bassier, Dube and Naidu \(2022\)](#).
- “Locked down and locked out: Repurposing social assistance as emergency relief to informal workers”: *World Development*. The covid-19 pandemic presents a particular challenge to countries with high levels of labour market informality. Using South Africa as a case study, we compare the poverty reduction effects of possible social grant interventions. See: [Bassier, Budlender, Zizzamia, Leibbrandt and Ranchhod \(2021\)](#).

#### *Active works in progress*

- “Collective Bargaining and Spillovers in Local Labor Markets”: *Job Market Paper, R&R Journal of the European Economic Association (JEEA)*. How does collective bargaining affect the broader wage structure? How are such spillovers transmitted? I propose a model-consistent and empirically rich measure of closely connected firms which captures firm strategic interaction, and test it across a decade of wage agreements matched with worker-level data in South Africa. See: [CEP Discussion Paper \(2022\)](#).

- “Vacancy Durations and Wages”: with Alan Manning and Barbara Petrongolo. Using the near-universe of online vacancies in the United Kingdom, we estimate an elasticity of vacancy durations to posted wages of around 3-5 based on firm wage policy changes from externally matched wage agreements and an event study of internally defined sharp wage changes. See: [IZA Discussion Paper \(2023\)](#).
- “Firm Dynamics and the Labour Supply Elasticity”: with Alan Manning
- “Job Search and Employer Market Power”: with Jeremias Klaeui and Alan Manning
- “Minimum Wage Spillovers and Fairness Concerns”: with Arindrajit Dube and Attila Lindner
- “Monopsony, Wage Floors and Structural Transformation”: with Joshua Budlender
- “The Firm Wage Gender Gap Over the Lifecycle”: with Leila Gautham

#### *Pre-PhD and policy-related work*

- “Exclusive growth: Rapidly increasing top incomes amidst low national growth in South Africa”: *South African Journal of Economics*, See: [Bassier and Woolard \(2020\)](#).
- “Exploring the idea that increasing profits is a legitimate operational requirement: Revisiting a 20-year old impulse”: *South African Law Journal*, Ramji, Phillips and Bassier (2023)
- “The labor market and poverty impacts of COVID-19 in South Africa”: *South African Journal of Economics*, See: [Bassier, Budlender, Jain and Zizzamia \(2023\)](#). Media coverage in *The Economist*.
- “Can minimum wages reduce poverty under low compliance?”: *R&R Review of Political Economy*, Bassier and Ranchhod. [Early version](#).
- “Social Distress and (Some) Relief: Estimating the Impact of Pandemic Job Loss on Poverty in South Africa”: *R&R International Journal of Microsimulation*, Bassier, Budlender and Goldman

#### *Policy reports*

- South African Presidency, Project Management Office: *January 2020 to Present*. Design of Covid-19 emergency relief social grants in response to the pandemic, implemented by the government from May 2020 to April 2021, and a second round from August 2021. Evaluation of stimulus effects of government employment programmes. Report link [here](#).
- South African National Treasury: *June 2021 to October 2021*. Simulating policy options for expansion of social grants. Full report link [here](#). Media coverage [here](#).

#### *Reviewer service for journals*

Quarterly Journal of Economics (QJE), AEJ: Policy, The Economic Journal (EJ), Journal of Labor Economics (JoLE), Journal of Human Resources (JHR), ILR Review (ILR), Development and Change, Review of Wealth and Income, South African Journal of Economics, Development Southern Africa, Review of Social Economy, Scientific African.

## GRANTS, CONFERENCES AND MEDIA

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### Research grants

- Structural Transformation and Economic Growth (STEG): Monopsony, wage floors and structural transformation. *Small Research Grant, Sep 2023 – Aug 2024*. Value: GBP25,000.
- Agency Francaise De Developpement (AFD): Co-principal investigator. Evaluating stimulus effects of a large public employment program. *Contracted through Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, Jan 2022 – Dec 2023*. Value: EUR145,000.
- Washington Center for Equitable Growth (WCEG): Principal investigator. Collective bargaining research using tax data in South Africa. *Dissertation support, Sep 2021 – Aug 2022*. Value: USD15,000.
- UNU-WIDER: Principal investigator. Collective bargaining in South Africa. *Research support. Aug 2019 – May 2022*. Value: USD24,000 (combined).

### Selected conferences

- Trade unions: Workshop, Paris School of Economics (PSE), Paris, September 2023.
- Collective bargaining and spillovers: Imperfect Competition in the Labour Market, Institute for Employment Research (IAB), Nuremberg, May 2023.
- Employment flows using administrative data: Micro-macro linkages in labour, Oxford University, Oxford, September 2022. Panel with Gabriel Ulyssea (chair), Markus Poschke, and Francois Gerard.
- Collective Bargaining, Wages, and Inequality: ASSA Annual Meeting, virtual, January 2022. Panel with Ellora Derenoncourt (chair), David Card, and Lorenzo Lagos.
- Mobility in the Labor Market: SOLE Annual Meeting, virtual, May 2021.
- The Differentiated Worker: Racial Capitalism in Post-Apartheid South Africa: International Conference on Caste and Race: Reconfiguring Solidarities, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, May 2018.

## Selected Op-eds

- COVID-19 and grants: With Joshua Budlender, November 2021; Joshua Budlender, Ronak Jain & Rocco Zizzamia, September 2020; Joshua Budlender, Rocco Zizzamia, Murray Leibbrandt & Vimal Ranchhod, March 2020
- Other COVID-19 related: With Refilwe Joala & Thando Vilakazi, July 2020; Adam Aboobaker, March 2020; Joshua Budlender & Andrew Kerr, February 2021
- Economics curriculum: [March 2016](#)

## EDUCATION

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### Doctoral studies: University of Massachusetts Amherst

*PhD in economics*

Amherst, USA

*Sep 2017 – Aug 2022*

### Prior education: University of Cape Town

*Honours in economics (Distinction), B.Sc. in Mathematics and Statistics*

Cape Town, South Africa

*Jan 2013 – Dec 2016*

## TEACHING

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### Course instructor

*Department of Economics*

University of Cape Town

*Jan – July 2017*

- Microeconomics: Co-taught a third year microeconomics course, with enrolment of over 500 students.
- Curriculum redesign: Giving focus to heterodox and social justice perspectives.

### Teaching Assistant

*Department of Economics*

*September 2016 - 2018*

- University of Massachusetts, Amherst: Macroeconomics (undergrad, Spring 2018).
- University of Cape Town: History of Economic Thought (undergrad, Spring 2016); Development Economics (undergrad, Fall 2016); Econometrics (graduate, Spring 2017).