Now inviting applications for the 2017-2018 academic year

The Inequality and Wealth Concentration PhD Scholars

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The Malcolm Hewitt Wiener PhD Scholars in Poverty and Justice

A multidisciplinary graduate training program developed with the National Science Foundation.

Fellowship awards

$32,000 dissertation stipend
+ $5,000 research funds

For Harvard PhD students in the social sciences now completing their 1st or 2nd year

Economics
Education
Government
Health Policy
Political Economy
Public Policy
Psychology
Sociology
Social Policy

Application deadline
Wednesday, June 14, 2017
Info: inequality.hks.harvard.edu
Faculty and administration

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Overview: Launching a new generation of Inequality & Social Policy Scholars

Research areas
Top-end income inequality and wealth concentration
Poverty and Justice
Inequalities and opportunity
Cross-cutting dimensions of inequality

Program components
Proseminar sequence
Inequality & Social Policy Seminar
Conferences and special events

Fellowship awards and terms
Inequality and Wealth Concentration PhD Scholars
Malcolm Hewitt Wiener PhD Scholars in Poverty and Justice

Application and eligibility
Overview: Launching a new generation of Inequality Scholars

The Multidisciplinary Program in Inequality & Social Policy is pleased to announce two exceptional fellowship opportunities for Harvard University doctoral students in the social sciences. We are now accepting applications for our second cohort of Inequality and Wealth Concentration PhD Scholars and Malcolm Hewitt Wiener PhD Scholars in Poverty and Justice.

A gift by anonymous donors to the Harvard Kennedy School launched the first cohort of eight Inequality and Wealth Concentration Scholars in 2016, giving new momentum to Harvard University efforts to cultivate the very best emerging scholarship on issues of inequality. This generous gift makes possible continued opportunities for PhD students to apply themselves to consequential problems and to gain insights and understanding from neighboring social science disciplines as they do so.

Alongside this initiative, we continue to build a cadre of Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Scholars in Poverty and Justice under the Inequality & Social Policy umbrella, two doctoral fellowships each year designated for PhD students whose research will advance our understanding of problems of material disadvantage and criminal justice and contribute to the discovery of social policy solutions to some of our most pressing societal challenges.

We are honored that these contributors have chosen to invest in PhD students. At a time of growing public concern about economic inequality, disparities in life chances, and the implications of high levels of wealth concentration, social science research can bring deep and rigorous scholarship to bear in analyzing these issues. We view the range of research questions represented in the program as the future of much exciting and important work in the social sciences. It is the choices made now, the problems young scholars choose to pursue, that will shape the research agenda and our progress on these issues in the coming years.

1. New lines of research: Top-end income inequality and wealth concentration

To spur new lines of research, half of the 8-10 Inequality and Wealth Concentration fellowships are designated for Harvard PhD students whose research interests encompass questions pertaining to top-end inequality or wealth concentration: their causes, consequences, or policies to address these developments. (The remaining Inequality and Wealth Concentration fellowships are open with respect to substantive focus and may reflect any of the Inequality & Social Policy themes).
Research has increased our understanding of important aspects of inequality by focusing on disparities in specific segments of the income distribution—e.g., gaps between the 10-50th or 10-90th percentiles. Yet overall economic inequality in the U.S. has been propelled largely by growth at the very top, which may reflect different determinants than explanations focused on other parts of the distribution. The pulling away of top incomes and wealth may have distinct consequences for economic growth, intergenerational mobility, or democratic politics. Policies aimed at addressing overall economic inequality or its consequences will likely differ from those designed to narrow gaps in specific segments of the distribution. Progress in either case will surely benefit by bringing greater analytic clarity to these “distinct, albeit interrelated challenges” of inequality (Summers, Kearney, and Hershbein 2015).

Magnitudes and trends in wealth inequality are even more striking, although measurement presents significant challenges and remains an important area of study. Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman find that most of the increase in U.S. wealth concentration in recent decades is driven by the top 0.1 percent, whose wealth share has grown from 7% in 1978 to 22% in 2012, comparable to levels seen in the early 20th century. At the same time, the bottom 90 percent wealth share has sharply reversed its historical upward trend, made possible by growing middle class wealth from pensions and homeownership through much of the mid-20th century. (Saez and Zucman 2015).

The scale of these developments invites more systematic inquiry, including historical and cross-national comparisons. Does it matter that the gains of economic prosperity largely accrue to small share of households, or that historical patterns in wealth-building have again become more concentrated? What consequences do trends at the upper reaches of the dis-

2. An engaged community of scholars

The Multidisciplinary Program in Inequality & Social Policy offers unparalleled resources for Harvard PhD students working in these research areas. Over 65 Faculty participants are engaged in the program, drawn from the Harvard departments of Economics, Government, and Sociology; the Harvard Kennedy School; Harvard Business School; and Harvard Graduate School of Education, and Harvard Law School.

Recent faculty additions to the program bring new strengths in income inequality and wealth concentration; intergenerational mobility; labor markets and human capital investment; government management of private-sector risks; regulation and government accountability; behavioral economics and household finance; judgment and decision-making; behavioral science in the design of social policy; regional economies and housing; and race, civil rights, and politics.

Doctoral participants gain membership in an active intellectual community of faculty and PhD students advancing new research in the study of labor markets, cities and neighborhood effects, race, immigration, political inequalities, criminal justice, public economics and fiscal policy, and comparative political economy—among its fields of activity.
Doctoral participants join a line of accomplished Alumni who have come through the Inequality & Social Policy program since its founding in 1998. The program now counts nearly 170 PhD social scientists among its former doctoral fellows, including several who now participate as faculty members. Former and current Inequality & Social Policy fellows have authored over 50 books that are shaping the field today. Their work has garnered some 30 book prizes, 60 early career awards, and over 65 dissertation and article awards.

In drawing together leading scholars at Harvard and beyond, the program aims to enrich and extend the work of Harvard PhD students with shared interests in questions of inequality and social policy. Doctoral students drawn from different disciplines gain opportunities they might not otherwise have to interact and learn from each other, from Harvard faculty drawn from across the University, and from the program's extensive network of national and international affiliates and alumni.

3. An integrated program of education and research

Doctoral participants pursue their research interests through an integrated set of training activities. The three-semester Proseminar in Inequality & Social Policy, taught by a multidisciplinary team of four faculty members, constitutes the core of the program. PhD students gain exposure to advanced scholarship in other fields and develop new insights from seeing how other disciplines approach similar research problems.

Doctoral scholars also attend the weekly Inequality & Social Policy Seminar Series, which brings to Harvard a rich array of leading scholars from different disciplines to showcase the best and latest research in the field and stimulate ongoing discussion of new ideas.

Conferences and special events bring together participants for exploration of larger themes and debates. To mark the launch of the Inequality and Wealth Concentration Scholars initiative, the program hosted university-wide event, Ten Big Ideas in the Study of Inequality, in October 2016, designed to identify the big and important questions in the field and catalyze further discussion and research. Much more is in store for the coming year.

4. Generous dissertation and research support

The program aims to encourage and cultivate the very best young scholars and new research in this domain. Doctoral students selected as Inequality and Wealth Concentration Scholars or Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Poverty and Justice Scholars will receive generous fellowship support to enable their full participation in this education and research initiative.

Scholars will generally be awarded a dissertation stipend of $32,000, reserved for use at the dissertation research stage (typically G-4 year), plus $5,000 in individual research funds, which may be used at any point during their doctoral studies.

These research funds are intended to enable Harvard PhD students to carry out ambitious original research where costs otherwise might be prohibitive. In making these enhanced resources available, the Inequality & Social Policy program aims to open new possibilities for Harvard PhD students to think boldly and creatively in pursuing innovative lines of inequality research.

Students who already hold substantial fellowship resources that effectively ensure five or more years of full stipend support (e.g. NSF, Soros, or Ford Foundation fellowship holders) will generally be awarded a larger and more flexible research fund of $12,000-$18,000 to directly support their academic work, in lieu of a dissertation stipend.

3. An integrated program of education and research

4. Generous dissertation and research support
Substantive research areas

This initiative is broadly structured around four research domains, which are meant to convey the scope of the program rather than mutually exclusive categories. The illustrative examples offered below by no means exhaust the sorts of questions that Scholars might investigate in their own work.

Core questions in each domain focus on causes, consequences, or policies to address issues of inequality. Policy questions are broadly conceived to include not only specific interventions, but also investigations of the politics and political economy that give rise to particular policy institutions and outcomes.

1. Top-end income inequality and wealth concentration

Top-end income inequality. Research in this domain seeks to understand the causes and consequences of growing income inequality driven by trends at the upper reaches of the distribution, particularly the gains of the top 1 percent.

Accounting for top-end income growth recognizes both labor market explanations and the growing role of capital income in the rise of top incomes in the U.S. since the late 1990s. To what extent do changes in technology, the supply and demand for education and skills, and globalization explain the rise of the 1 percent? What is the role of CEO pay and executive compensation? How much top-end inequality is driven by pay dispersion within versus across firms? How do other countries compare, and what explains cross-national differences?

The magnitude of the rise in top-end inequality invites empirical examination of its systemic consequences—its economic, political, and social effects for those at other strata in the distribution. What is the effect of top-end inequality on economic growth? What are the mechanisms by which it motivates or impedes innovation? Does top-end inequality induce “consumption cascades,” consumption choices that ripple down the distribution? Do these consumption choices in turn increase the odds of financial distress (Bertrand & Morse, Frank)?

What are the effects of a pulling away of top incomes on social stratification and affinity? How does it affect willingness to invest in public goods? How does growing income inequality at the top affect the distribution of political preferences and political participation? Does economic inequality at the top drive political polarization and government gridlock?

Wealth concentration. Income and wealth inequality are closely linked, but wealth will also reflect differences in savings rates, rates of return, and inherited wealth. What are the sources and consequences of even greater levels of concentration at the top of the wealth distribution? How did the Great Recession affect the wealth distribution? How rigid is the wealth structure, and to what extent is wealth inequality maintained across generations? What is relative importance of different channels of intergenerational wealth transmission (Pfeffer and Killewald 2015)? What are the consequences of soaring levels of wealth inequality at the top for intergenerational mobility?

The political implications of growing wealth concentration for democracy has drawn attention in public discourse, but empirical research on these issues has only begun to scratch the surface. Research by Theda Skocpol and colleagues has highlighted the importance not simply of vast inflows of money into politics in recent years, but its organization and strategic deployment through wealthy donor networks. How have these developments affected the political parties, their strategies, and policy outcomes?

Stepping back, what are the political economy dynamics that have contributed to the rise of top-end income and wealth inequality? What are the political and economic interests that have shaped the institutions and regulatory frameworks governing financial markets, intellectual property rights, housing markets, antitrust and labor law, or bankruptcy law?

What tax and regulatory policies can address top-end inequality and wealth concentration? How does the mobility of capital shape optimal tax policy? What are the politics and political economy of tax policy? What policies can help increase middle class savings and asset-building across the distribution?
2. Poverty and justice

**Poverty.** Research here aims to deepen our understanding of the nature of poverty and economic insecurity for individuals and families. What are the causes of persistent poverty? What are the main sources of economic insecurity, and what effects do economic shocks have long-term socioeconomic mobility?

What are effective social policies to alleviate material hardship and foster durable mobility out of poverty? What can be done to tackle joblessness and boost earnings among the lowest-paid workers? What has been the impact of the Earned Income Tax Credit, education and workforce training, housing policies, moving to opportunity programs, and pay for performance (social impact bonds) as models for tackling problems of economic insecurity and opportunity?

What explains the distinctive U.S. welfare state? How do differences in interest group organization, electoral institutions, and economic and social institutions explain the cross-national variation that we see?

**Criminal justice.** After forty years of growth in the scale of criminal punishment, the United States has built a massive penal system unparalleled in the world, incarcerating whole segments of America’s poor and minority communities. (Western 2015). What is the effect of the criminal justice system on the families of the incarcerated, victims of crime and violence, and communities now saturated with criminal justice supervision?

What are promising policies to meet the challenges of reentry and employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated? What are the political forces that contributed to sharp rise in mass incarceration, and what are the politics underlying prospects for criminal justice reform today?

3. Inequalities and opportunity

**Inequalities.** Research in this domain explores inequalities as they manifest themselves in various domains. Cross-national comparisons can help disentangle potential explanations and bring into sharper relief the political underpinnings of different national responses to inequality, including labor market and family policies.

**Labor markets.** How have skill-biased technological changes, changing demographics, globalization, and declining unionization, and government policies such as the minimum wage affected wage dispersion? What explains the gender wage gap? How can firms foster diversity?

**Gender and family.** To what extent do changing gender norms affect women’s participation in household and labor market activities? How does changing family structure shape patterns of poverty and the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage? In turn, how have changes in economic opportunity and insecurity affected family formation and stability?

**Educational inequalities. Access and quality.** Most explanations of rising inequality focus attention on formal education at all levels as the most powerful mobility device. How might disparities in access and school quality be narrowed?

**Environmental inequalities.** Those living in poor communities are particularly likely to be exposed to environmental toxins. What are the economic, political, and social sources of these disparities, and what are the long-term developmental and societal consequences? Examining the economics and politics of environmental issues can deepen our understanding of the unequal incidence of environmental harms, just as they can inform the development, implementation, and enforcement of effective environmental regulation.

**Political inequalities.** What are the sources of political inequalities in engagement, participation, and representation? How are economic and social inequalities related to issues of civic trust, democratic governance, and accountability?
Opportunity and intergenerational mobility. To what extent do the circumstances in which a child is born determine life outcomes? Measuring socioeconomic mobility over the life course and intergenerational mobility is a central area of inquiry. Are income or wealth inequality causally related to socioeconomic mobility, or are they best viewed as distinct phenomena? How has intergenerational mobility changed over time? What are the mechanisms of intergenerational transmission of advantage, and how might these differ at different points in the income distribution?

Research has shown that gaps contributing to later educational achievement emerge quite early in childhood, with enduring consequences for later life chances. How can we narrow opportunity gaps for low-income children?

4. Cross-cutting dimensions: Racial and spatial inequalities

Research here seeks to understand cross-cutting dimensions of inequality, disparities not simply reducible to income inequality. Racial and spatial inequalities suggest further empirical investigation of the ways race and place continue to shape the lives and life chances of individuals.

Race. The nature of poverty, labor force participation, socioeconomic mobility, health, and wealth all exhibit enduring differences by race. Research has shown that black families live in poorer neighborhoods than white families at similar incomes (Reardon, Fox, and Townsend 2015). Seventy percent of African-Americans who live in today’s poorest, most racially-segregated neighborhoods are from families who lived in similar neighborhoods three decades ago (Sharkey 2013). Evidence suggests that black children raised in middle-income families fall out of the middle class at higher rates than white children in adulthood (Brown 2016).

Black joblessness remains higher than that of whites, with no appreciable narrowing of this gap over more than four decades. Black unemployment remains higher at all education levels. African-Americans exhibit premature aging on a variety of health measures and shorter life expectancies than whites, health disparities that are present at all income and education levels (Williamson 2016). Racial wealth gaps are large and growing: Average family wealth for whites in 2013 was $678,000, compared to $95,000 for black families.

What are the social and institutional structures that contribute to persistent disparities in outcomes by race? What role do implicit biases and discrimination play? How can social policy work to reduce racial disparities in access to opportunity and in the distribution of valuable resources? How does the politics of race influence social policy?

Spatial inequalities. A growing body of research in sociology and economics suggests that one’s neighborhood shapes various individual outcomes and upward mobility later in life. Research in political geography highlights the ways in which spatial features shape political processes and policy outcomes.

What are the mechanisms of neighborhood environment that shape opportunity and life outcomes? What are the implications for policy aimed at improving opportunity for those living in distressed neighborhoods? What is the role for moving-to-opportunity programs, investments in schools, or investment in neighborhoods?

In the context of growing income and wealth concentration, how does the geography of inequality and economic segregation affect social interactions and individual outcomes? What are the consequences of growing economic segregation for the supply and distribution of local public goods? How does political geography influence the mobilization and representation of political interests? How does it shape capacities to address local social problems? How do the politics of land-use, local development, and mass transit reinforce or mitigate problems of poverty and inequality at the metro level?

Evidence of declining geographic mobility and labor market fluidity in the US over the past three decades has been identified as a potential contributor to income inequality (Ganong and Shoag 2015, Molloy et al 2016). What are the sources of changes in geographic mobility and labor market fluidity? What role do housing markets and land-use regulation play?
Program components

1. Proseminar sequence and research

The Proseminar in Inequality & Social Policy, a three-term course sequence, serves as the central vehicle for bringing Inequality doctoral fellows from different disciplines together in an intensive and sustained multidisciplinary learning experience.

The first two semesters of the Proseminar survey central debates in the program’s eight substantive research areas. Explicitly multidisciplinary in approach, the course is taught by a team of four faculty members drawn from the disciplines of economics, political science, and sociology. The class is expected to meet Wednesdays, 2-4 pm, in both the fall and spring terms in 2017-2018.

A focus in the first year of the Proseminar is the development of a major piece of publishable research. Students receive extensive feedback over the course of the year from one or more faculty advisers in the program. The Proseminar thus offers participants a uniquely structured setting in which to undertake a significant research project of their own.

The third-term Proseminar, taken in the fall of the succeeding year (Mondays, 2-4 pm), is dedicated to the presentation and advancement to publication of this research paper. Organized as a research workshop, it pairs each student with an invited academic speaker from the Harvard Inequality & Social Policy Seminar Series (described more fully on pages 10-12).

The invited scholar attends the proseminar class and serves as principal discussant for the student paper. The participation of these faculty visitors, selected by the students themselves for their expertise in the student’s specific research area, affords a rare opportunity for doctoral participants to engage in an extended discussion of their own research with a leading national scholar in their research field.

2. Harvard Inequality & Social Policy Seminar Series

Doctoral Fellows also attend the Harvard Inequality & Social Policy Seminar Series, a public research forum in which leading scholars in their fields share research with the Harvard and greater-Boston Inequality & Social Policy community.

Meeting weekly over lunch on Mondays from 12:00-1:45 p.m., the seminar ensures exposure to a diverse set of research topics and methods. As with the proseminar, the series is explicitly cross-disciplinary in character, drawing liberally from economics, political science, sociology, and other social science fields to illuminate productive areas for cross-fertilization.

The seminar lists on the following pages illustrate the range of substantive interests and modes of inquiry represented in the seminar.

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Exemplary research programs are strongly multidisciplinary, pushing the frontiers of research by continually confronting new perspectives and engaging with the best scholarship being developed in other fields.
3. Conferences and special events

Doctoral Scholars also participate in the program's conferences and special events, held a few times each year.

Doctoral participants gain many opportunities, both through special events and in the course of the academic year, to meet and interact with invited national speakers and affiliates throughout the Harvard community.

Key program requirements summarized

Doctoral participants in the Inequality & Social Policy program are expected under the terms of their award to:

- Enroll in the three-term Proseminar course sequence in fall 2017, culminating in the completion of an original research project and its presentation in the third-term Proseminar in fall 2018.
- Attend and participate in the weekly Harvard Inequality & Social Policy Seminar Series.
- Participate in conferences and special events organized by the Inequality & Social Policy program.
Fall 2016

BRIAN A. JACOB, Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan
Differentiated Accountability and Education Production: Evidence from NCLB Waivers.

DONALD P. GREEN, Political Science, Columbia University

LESLEY McCALL, Sociology and Political Science, Northwestern Univ
The Opportunity Model of Beliefs about Inequality and Redistribution.

TOMMIE SHELBY, AAAS and Philosophy, Harvard University
Prisons of the Forgotten: King on Ghettos and Economic Justice.

DANIEL TICHENOR, Political Science, University of Oregon
Democracy’s Shadow: The Political Development of America’s Unauthorized Immigration Dilemma.

OLAV SORENSON, Yale School of Management
Do Startups Create Good Jobs?

DEREK NEAL, Economics and Education, University of Chicago

LINDA M. BURTON, Sociology, Duke University
Neuro-Ethnography, Trauma, and Poverty: Social Capital Trajectories among the Rural Poor.

EVELYN Z. BRODKIN, Social Service Admin, University of Chicago
After the Electoral Earthquake: The Politics of Inequality and Reflections on the Policy-Practice-Politics Connection.

MARY PATILLO, Sociology & African-Am Studies, Northwestern Univ
The Future of Black Metropolis

JOSEPH G. ALTONJI, Economics, Yale University
Quantifying Family, School, and Location Effects in the Presence of Complementarities and Sorting.

BEN W. ANSELL, Political Science, Nuffield College, Oxford University

ANNA AIZER, Economics and Public Policy, Brown University

Spring 2017

RYAN D. ENOS, Government, Harvard University

DARON ACEMOGLU, Economics, MIT
Machine vs. Man: The Labor Market in the Age of Robots.

STEFANIE STANTCHEVA, Economics, Harvard University
Intergenerational Mobility and Preferences for Redistribution.

MICHAIL HOUT, Sociology, New York University
Was Trump a Meteor or a Volcano? Racial Resentment and Immigration Built Up as Strong Predictors of Whites’ Votes from the 2000 Election to the 2012 Election.

MARIO LUIS SMALL, Sociology, Harvard University
The Rising Heterogeneity of Poor Neighborhoods across Cities.

DANIELLE ALLEN, Government, Harvard University
Political Equality as a Human Good.

MICHELE LAMONT, Sociology and AAAS, Harvard University
Addressing Recognition Gaps: Destigmatization Processes and the Making of Inequality.

CAROL STEIKER, Harvard Law School
The Criminalization of Poverty.

DAVID AUTOR, Economics, MIT

ROLAND G. FRYER, Jr, Economics, Harvard University
Using Economics to Solve Racial Inequality.

ROBERT J. SAMPSON, Sociology, Harvard University
The Life Course of Crime and Criminalization.

LAWRENCE H. SUMMERS, Economics, Harvard University
TBA.
10 BIG IDEAS
IN THE STUDY OF INEQUALITY
The Inequality and Wealth Concentration Scholars
The Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Scholars in Poverty & Justice

Through their participation in the program, those named as Inequality and Wealth Concentration Scholars or Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Scholars in Poverty and Justice will generally receive:

(i) **A dissertation-stage stipend of $32,000**, reserved for use at the dissertation stage (generally G-4 year) so that Scholars may focus exclusively on dissertation research and writing. This award is for an academic year, disbursed over ten months.

(ii) **Individual research fund of $5,000**, which may be used at any time during the Scholar’s doctoral studies. These resources are intended to spur innovative student research where costs might otherwise be prohibitive. They are meant to support field research and in-depth interviews, original data collection, data purchases, field or laboratory experiments, large-scale surveys, and similar research needs.

In making award determinations, the selection committee will take into account existing resources, particularly for students who already hold combinations of Harvard funding and multi-year external fellowships (e.g. NSF, Soros, or Ford Foundation fellowships) resulting in five or more years of full stipend coverage. In these circumstances, the Inequality & Social Policy program would likely confer a more generous and flexible individual research fund of $12,000-$18,000 in lieu of a dissertation stipend.
Application and eligibility

This program is designed for Harvard doctoral students in the social sciences who are now completing their first or second year of doctoral study (G-1 or G-2). The curriculum focuses primarily on research from the disciplines of economics, political science, sociology, and social policy. Students from Harvard’s PhD programs in African and African-American Studies, Economics, Education, Government, Health Policy, Political Economy and Government, Psychology, Public Policy, Sociology, Social Policy, or in a related doctoral program with a focus on social science research are eligible to apply.

Both U.S. and international students are fully eligible for the Inequality & Social Policy fellowship awards. Although the program began as a National Science Foundation initiative, it is no longer funded by a federal grant, allowing both U.S. and international students to participate equally.

Application forms are available on our website inequality.hks.harvard.edu

Applications may be submitted via email (preferred) inequality@harvard.edu

Or in hardcopy form to:
Pamela L. Metz
Multidisciplinary Program in Inequality & Social Policy
Harvard Kennedy School
79 JFK Street, Taubman 402 (Box 103)
Cambridge, MA 02138

Application deadline
Wednesday, June 14, 2017.