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Brett Maranjian
NBER
1050 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge
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09/09/2020

Dear Ms. Brett Maranjian,

I am a fourth year PhD student in economics at the London School of Economics, and I am writing in order to apply for the NBER Graduate Student Workshop on Business Income Taxation. Please find my CV and one-page essay below. A recommendation letter from my supervisor—Johannes Spinnewjin—will be sent separately, as requested.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Jack Fisher

I am a fourth year economics PhD student at the London School of Economics with two broad research agendas. Most related to this Workshop, I am interested in the efficacy of corporate income tax (CIT) regimes. This interest has manifested itself in a research project that studies the difference between firms' accounting and administrative tax records: the Book-Tax Gap (BTG). As part of this project, I have applied to the UK's HMRC for access to administrative CIT records with Jakob Brounstein and Gabriel Zucman at UC, Berkeley. The aim of this project is to dissect the profit BTG into its constituent parts—revenues and costs—in order to better understand the margins which firms manipulate that lead to a BTG. Moreover, we will compare multinational and domestic firms, and analyze legislative shocks to the CIT regime in the UK, which affected incentives to shift profits abroad, so as to better understand the role of profit shifting in the BTG. We are also in the process of applying to the IRS JSRP to conduct a similar project with US data.

My second research agenda focuses on the gig-economy and self-employment. I find this area interesting from two perspectives: firstly, from the policy angle, which seeks to encourage entrepreneurship and simultaneously protect individuals from precarious work; and secondly, from the perspective of firms who rely on workers that are not employees. These firms aim to incentivize workers without shifting an unnecessary burden of risk and without any assurance of labor supply, while facing competition from other firms. I am working on projects in this area that examine an array of issues: behavioral frictions that prevent drivers from exploiting their flexibility, how gig-economy workers respond to incentives and information, and the extent to which the flexibility offered by gig-economy platforms is constrained by cost side constraints.

I see these research areas as distinct but with broad, unifying themes behind them. Both deal with issues that have become increasingly important for modern economies in recent decades. The need to effectively tax multinational firms was only explicitly tackled with some degree of international coordination in 2012, when the G20 tasked the OECD to develop an action plan regarding base erosion profit shifting, and the rise of the gig economy began in earnest with the emergence of Uber in 2014. Moreover, knowledge of both topics can be furthered with the introduction of new data, which is something I seek to contribute to. For the project with HMRC, myself and coauthors are combining data sources that have not been brought together previously, and, with regards to the gig-economy, I work alongside firms that have rich data on the economic environment their workers and customers operate in.

This workshop would further my knowledge of topics in the business income taxation literature, and would improve my vision for future research avenues. I anticipate helpful discussions of methodologies that have been used in the literature, and coverage of institutional details and policy debates that I have yet to learn about. Given my current research, I think this would be especially true for Alan Auerbach's section on international business taxation. I would also look forward to connecting with my peers and senior faculty to see where, going forward, they see fruitful areas of research—and I would be excited to hear about ongoing research, and how this can inform and complement my own work.

Jack Welcome Fisher

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Education

- **University of California, Berkeley** — CA, USA
  Visiting Scholar. — *Aug. 2018 – Aug. 2020*
  - **PhD courses attended**: Industrial Organization A, Psychology and Economics A&B, Public Economics A&B.
- **London School of Economics and Political Science** — London, UK
  MRes/PhD Economics; ESRC Studentship. — *Sep. 2017 – Present*
  - **PhD courses completed**: Economics of Industry, Microeconomic Theory, Public Economics.
- **University of Oxford** — Oxford, UK
  MPhil Economics; ESRC Studentship and Balliol Economics Scholarship. — *Oct. 2014 – June 2016*
  - **PhD courses completed**: Advanced Econometrics II, Advanced Macroeconomics I&II, Financial Economics I, International Economics I&II.
- **University of York** — York, UK
  BSc Economics; Andrew Meechan Prize and Head of Department Prize 2nd & 3rd Year. — *Oct. 2010 – June 2014*

Experience

- **Addison Lee** — London, UK
  Freelance Researcher — *Sep. 2017 – Present*
  - **Behavioral Insights**: I use rich ride-level data in order to provide advice on driver management and remuneration by applying lessons from behavioral and labor economics.
- **London School of Economics and Political Science** — London, UK
  Research Assistant for Francois Gerard and Joana Naritomi — *Sep. 2017 – June 2018*
  - **Network Analysis**: I used Brazilian administrative data in order to assess how VAT exemptions lead to segregated firm-trade networks, which has consequences for the optimality of VAT in developing countries.
  - **Causal Inference**: We leverage variation across time and firms in order to determine the causal impact of VAT policy; this is done using a mixture of non-parametric and parametric methods.
- **London School of Economics and Political Science** — London, UK
  Pre-Doctoral Fellow for Henrik Kleven, Camille Landais, and Johannes Spinnewijn — *Oct. 2016 – Sep. 2017*
  - **Big Data**: I worked closely with large administrative data sets with the aim of understanding causal economic mechanisms that are relevant for public policy; this involved using a variety of empirical techniques.
  - **Theoretical work**: I used dynamic programming methods to highlight the importance of non-stationary forces in determining the optimal path of unemployment benefits over the unemployment horizon.
  - **Numerical Methods**: I calibrated and solved a neoclassical savings model to assess its empirical relevance.
- **Bank of England** — London, UK
  Postgraduate Intern — *June 2016 – Oct. 2016*
  - **International Directorate**: I developed country risk indicators that covered eight countries over three decades, as part of the Bank's broader international risk assessment effort; this culminated in a Bank working paper.
  - **Brexit**: I was offered a contract extension in order to work in the EU Withdrawal team; in this role I helped to prepare briefings for the Governor and the Government, which communicated the Bank's latest insights on Brexit.

Programming Languages

- **Experience with**: R, STATA, Matlab, Python

References

- **Prof Camille Landais**: c.landais@lse.ac.uk, +44(0)2079557864, London School of Economics
- **Prof Johannes Spinnewijn**: j.spinnewijn@lse.ac.uk, +44 (0)2079557022, London School of Economics

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THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

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September 10, 2020

Reference Letter Jack Fisher

To whom it may concern:

I am writing regarding Jack Fisher's application for the NBER Graduate Student Workshop on Business Income Taxation. I recommend him enthusiastically and without hesitation. Jack is one of the most if not the most promising PhD students I have interacted with in my time at the LSE. I got to know Jack when we hired him as a full-time research assistant for the academic year (2016-2017), right after graduation as an MPhil at Oxford. We were very glad he then accepted our offer to start the PhD at LSE the year after and I have been his supervisor since. Jack has considered applying for US PhD's of course and we would have recommended him to the very top without hesitation. But he was keen on staying in London. I have then taken a sabbatical leave in 2018-2019 at Berkeley and Jack has joined me there for the year. So he has taken several courses there and is still in touch with various faculty members from Berkeley as well.

Already as an RA, Jack established himself as being bright, perceptive, creative and committed. He is very versatile, combining excellent theoretical and data-analysis skills. He has been putting his skills to good use in his research as well. Jack just finished his first year after the course work and he has been very productive. He is finishing up an excellent paper in which he uses taxi data from a London-based company and uses salient sources of wage variation to estimate Frisch and Marshallian labor supply responses to infer drivers' preferences and shows how these are inconsistent with observed stopping behaviour in response to daily wage variation, which has been often studied in the literature. He then uses this to quantify how much optimization frictions affect the welfare consequences from the flexibility gig-economy workers get.

Jack is developing himself as a very strong applied micro economist and starting to work on different projects now. From the gig economy and the design of wage schemes or social insurance, Jack has been moving his attention to studying firm behaviour and the design of corporate income tax regimes. He has started a project with Gabriel Zucman, in which they will analyse the Book-Tax Gap using data from the HMRC. He wants to solidify his knowledge on the research in business income taxation and this lectures series and conference will expose him to the frontier. He will be an active and engaging participant and he would benefit a lot from being able to attend this.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information about Jack's application.

Sincerely,



Johannes Spinnewijn