



JAMES M. AND CATHLEEN D. STONE
CENTER FOR INEQUALITY DYNAMICS
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Stone Center Annual Report 2025–26

Cutting-edge research on social
inequality in a supportive
intellectual community.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN · INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

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Find a study by its number

23.5%

of metro Detroit’s taxable property wealth would need to shift for every municipality to have the same tax base per resident → [p. 6](#)

About 80%

of Danish mothers’ cumulative earnings losses over 20 years after first birth were offset by public transfers → [p. 7](#)

Nearly 50%

of observers did not classify a Spanish-speaking person with a Spanish name as Hispanic if the person looked distinctively White or Black → [p. 12](#)

About the Stone Center

The Stone Center for Inequality Dynamics (CID) at the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research (ISR) aims to:

- 1 Produce cutting-edge research on social inequality, especially wealth inequality**
- 2 Train the next generation of inequality scholars**
- 3 Build a robust intellectual community**

We pursue these aims as an interdisciplinary group of social scientists working in a collaborative space. Our team includes experts on topics such as wealth and income inequality, economic mobility, economic sociology, and housing. Together, we examine how between-group inequalities are shaped by geographic, political, and institutional contexts.



The CID team in Boston. September 23, 2026.

\$5M

In December 2025, the James M. and Cathleen D. Stone Foundation made a \$5 million gift to support the Center's work through 2031.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report covers September 1, 2025–August 31, 2026, but also includes September 2026 updates and a preview of 2026–27 activities.

A message from the director



In December 2025, the James M. and Cathleen D. Stone Foundation made a new \$5 million gift to support the Stone Center for Inequality Dynamics (CID). The gift will sustain the Stone Center’s work through 2031, supporting research and training the next generation of inequality scholars. It will also allow the Center to increase student fellowships and launch a faculty grants program.

I am profoundly grateful to the Stone Foundation for their support. At a time of shrinking financial support for social science research, the Stone Foundation has been steadfast in their commitment to advancing research and training at U-M and across the Stone network.

The Stone Center aims to be a university-wide home for U-M scholars studying inequality, regardless of their discipline, career stage, or research method. Since its founding in 2019, the Center has grown to a community of more than one hundred faculty, postdocs, staff, and students representing dozens of departments and research units across the University. I am thrilled that Jeremy Levine, associate professor of Organizational Studies, Sociology, and Public Policy, has agreed to serve as the Stone Center’s associate director, allowing us to expand our activities and mentorship for our growing community.

As we embark on the next five years, the Stone Center remains committed to taking up pressing questions about the effect of economic inequality on the world around us. This fall, the Stone Working Group on Inequality and Political Economy (SWIPE) launched the two-year “Whose Democracy?” event series to explore the consequences of economic inequality for U.S. democracy (p. 22).

This report showcases just some of the activities and accomplishments of the Stone Center community over the last year, including funded graduate student research projects (p. 15), publications and awards (pp. 07, 19), and profiles of two recent additions to our core faculty (pp. 09, 11). You can also check out a preview of the year ahead, including the fall lineup of our Speaker Series (p. 21).

Many of the Stone Center’s activities, including our writing retreats, annual book club, and SWIPE, were developed by its members. I am grateful every day for the willingness of CID’s staff, students, postdocs, and faculty to bring their creativity, passion, and generosity to the work we do. I can’t wait to see what ideas emerge in the next five years.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sasha".

SASHA KILLEWALD • DIRECTOR
STONE CENTER FOR INEQUALITY DYNAMICS

The core team

Faculty, research scientists, postdoctoral fellows, and staff who run the Center day-to-day.

LEADERSHIP AND OPERATIONS



Sasha Killewald
Director



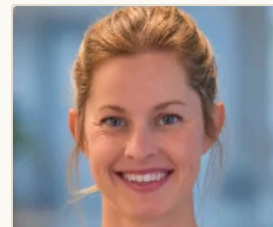
Jeremy Levine
Associate Director



Melissa Bora
Program Manager

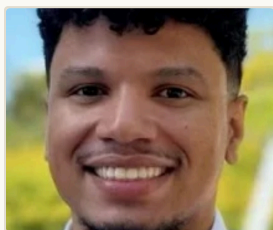


Ian Burnette
Engagement Manager

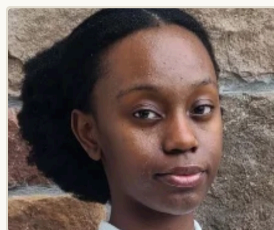


Emily Weisenstein
Administrative Assistant

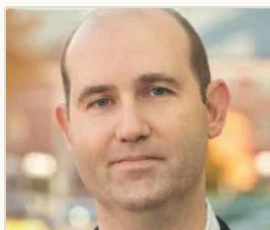
FACULTY AND RESEARCH STAFF



Alexander Adames
Assistant Professor
Sociology



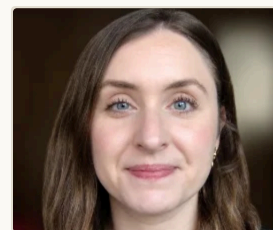
Eunice Adjapong
Junior Professional
Researcher



W. Carson Byrd
Associate Research
Scientist
Center for the Study of
Higher and Postsecondary
Education



Thomas Crossley
Research Professor
Director, Panel Study of
Income Dynamics



Sarah Farr
Postdoctoral Research
Fellow
Health Management
and Policy



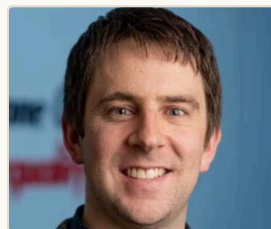
Noura Insolera
Assistant Research
Scientist
Assistant Director, Panel
Study of Income Dynamics



Carrie Jankowski
Data Scientist



Joe LaBriola
Research Assistant
Professor



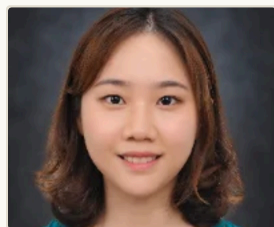
Robert Manduca
Assistant Professor
Sociology



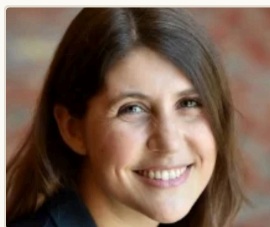
Pablo Mitnik
Assistant Research
Scientist



Davon Norris
Assistant Professor
Organizational Studies



Sae Hyun (Grace) Oh
Postdoctoral Research
Fellow
Panel Study of Income
Dynamics



Fabiana Silva
Assistant Professor
Gerald R. Ford School of
Public Policy



Haowen Zheng
Postdoctoral Research
Fellow

Jeremy Levine appointed associate director

Jeremy Levine has been appointed associate director of the Stone Center, taking on leadership responsibilities for events and programming. He will help shape the Speaker Series, Early Ideas Workshop, Writing Group, open houses, and recruitment events, while continuing to lead the Stone Working Group on Inequality and Political Economy (SWIPE).



THE STONE CENTER WELCOMES NEW COLLEAGUES



Thomas Crossley

FACULTY ASSOCIATE

Understanding household financial security and living standards.

Thomas Crossley joined the Stone Center as a faculty associate. A research professor in the Survey Research Center and director of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), he studies household consumption and saving, financial security, and living standards. His research also advances the design and analysis of survey data and the measurement of economic well-being.



Haowen Zheng

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOW

Studying how institutions and places shape mobility.

Haowen Zheng joined the Stone Center as a postdoctoral research fellow, bringing a research agenda that connects intergenerational mobility to labor markets, education, families, and geography.

At the Stone Center, Zheng is working with the Stone Center's Pablo Mitnik and Tali Kristal of the University of Haifa on a study of income distribution by social class in U.S. manufacturing from 1967 to 2022. Her broader scholarship examines how institutions and places structure opportunity, including how geographic mobility intersects with family background, education, housing, and health.



Ian Burnette

ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

Strengthening communication and engagement.

Ian Burnette joined the Stone Center as Engagement Manager, supporting how the Center communicates its research, convenes its community, and connects with audiences across and beyond the University of Michigan.

Their work spans editorial and digital communications, event outreach, the Center's website and newsletters, and systems for sustaining relationships with scholars, campus partners, and external stakeholders. In the coming year, Burnette will continue developing ways for people to encounter CID's research, programs, and intellectual community.

Our community across U-M

The Stone Center’s **118 community members** connect its work to **12 U-M schools and colleges** and **four major research institutes**, along with programs and initiatives across the university.

118

Stone Center community members

12

U-M schools and colleges represented

4

Major research institutes represented

SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

College of Literature, Science, and the Arts
Sociology · Economics · Political Science · Statistics · Psychology · Organizational Studies · Women’s and Gender Studies · Science, Technology, and Society · Lieberthal-Rogel Center for Chinese Studies · Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies · African Studies Center

Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy
Education Policy Initiative · Center for Racial Justice · Youth Policy Lab

School of Public Health
Epidemiology · Health Management and Policy · Center for Social Epidemiology and Population Health · HELPER Team

Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning
Architecture · Urban and Regional Planning · Reporative Technology Lab · Collective for Equitable Housing

Medical School
Internal Medicine

Marsal Family School of Education
Michigan Admissions Collaboratory · Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education

Stephen M. Ross School of Business
Management and Organizations · Strategy

School for Environment and Sustainability
Center for Sustainable Systems

School of Social Work
Center on Assets, Education, and Inclusion

Rackham Graduate School

School of Information

College of Engineering
Engineering Education Research

RESEARCH INSTITUTES

Institute for Social Research
Survey Research Center
Demography of Aging, Disability, and Care · Panel Study of Income Dynamics · Health and Retirement Study · Surveys of Consumers · Social Environment and Health Program · Life Course Development Program · Landscapes of Population Health Program · Data Science for Dynamic Intervention Decision Making Center

Population Studies Center
Population Dynamics and Health Program

Center for Political Studies

Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research

Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation

Michigan Institute for Computational Discovery and Engineering

Michigan Institute for Data and AI in Society

CROSS-CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

Poverty Solutions · Center for Global Health Equity · Institute for Research on Women and Gender · ADVANCE Program · ASSET Research Group · Michigan Society of Fellows · Consortium on the American Political Economy

Community membership as of September 2026. Selected connections reflect academic appointments, research activities, memberships, and fellowships.

How municipal boundaries divide taxable wealth

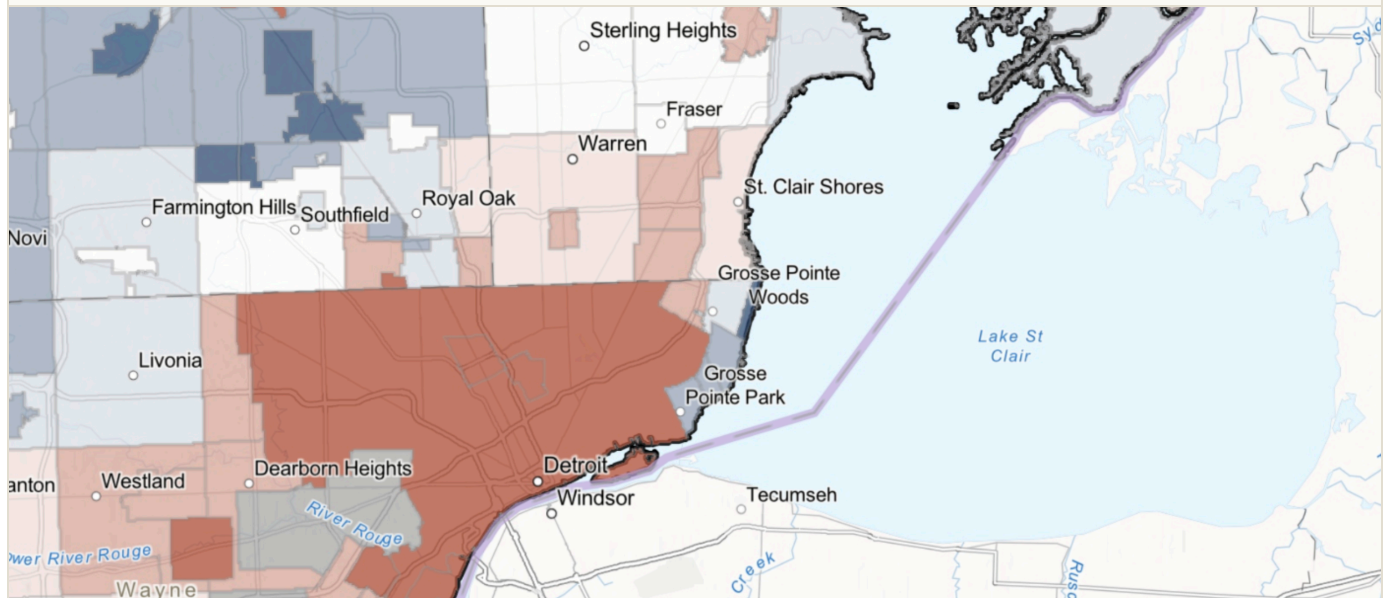
Communities can share a regional economy while having very different resources for public services. CID faculty member **Robert Manduca**, along with Brian Highsmith and Jacob Waggoner, examines how municipal boundaries divide the property wealth available to local governments.

23.5%

of metropolitan Detroit's taxable property wealth would need to shift across municipal boundaries to give every municipality the same tax base per resident.

Detroit and nearby municipalities: local tax bases relative to the metropolitan average

Red shades indicate tax bases below the metropolitan average; blue shades indicate tax bases above it.



Fiscal capacity ratio



Map: taxbasefragmentation.net. Province of Ontario | Oakland County, Michigan | Esri | TomTom | Garmin | SafeGraph | CGIAR | USGS | FAO | METI/NASA | EPA | NPS | USFWS

A national measure

Using 138 million property tax records covering approximately 96% of the U.S. population, the researchers measure an often-overlooked dimension of inequality: how taxable wealth is distributed among local jurisdictions. Because property taxes help fund local public services, these boundaries help determine which communities have access to the region's taxable wealth.

Explore your community

The accompanying interactive map makes these differences visible. Search for a city or town, compare its tax base with its metropolitan average, and click a jurisdiction for detailed figures.

taxbasefragmentation.net

Manduca, R., Highsmith, B., & Waggoner, J. (2026). Tax base fragmentation as a dimension of metropolitan inequality. *Socio-Economic Review*, 24(1), 331–362. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwaf055>.

Selected Publications



Social insurance and the definition of wealth

Robert Manduca • Assistant Professor

Manduca, R. (2025). Should social insurance programs count as wealth? *Socio-Economic Review*, 23(4), 1863–1893.
[doi:10.1093/ser/mwaf020](https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwaf020).

Measures of wealth typically emphasize marketable assets. Manduca asks whether pensions and social insurance should also count when they provide many of the same functions. Because this “augmented wealth” often exceeds marketable wealth in total value and is distributed more evenly, the definition can alter basic conclusions about wealth inequality. He argues for use-specific definitions: identify the function of wealth relevant to a study, then include all assets available for that use.



Public transfers and the motherhood income penalty

Alexandra Killewald • Director

Christensen, T. B.-S., & Killewald, A. (2026). Can a motherhood premium in public transfer income offset the Danish motherhood earnings penalty? *European Sociological Review*, 42(4), 573–589.
[doi:10.1093/esr/jcaf036](https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcaf036).

Therese Bay-Smidt Christensen and Alexandra Killewald use Danish register data to examine how motherhood affects income from employment and the state. Over two decades after first birth, about \$98,000 in additional public transfers offset roughly 80% of an estimated \$120,000 in cumulative labor-income losses. The study estimates the resulting cumulative loss in personal income at about \$23,000. The findings show that governments, when they choose to, can substantially reduce the income costs of motherhood.



Safety-net support and household credit

Davon Norris • Assistant Professor

Rhodes, A. P., Norris, D., Houle, J., Dwyer, R. E., Bruch, S. K., & Berger, L. M. (2026). Unsecured credit and the social safety net in U.S. states. *American Sociological Review*, 91(2), 349–377.
[doi:10.1177/00031224251411563](https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224251411563).

Davon Norris and coauthors examine how state safety nets relate to households’ use of unsecured credit. More supportive state safety nets are associated with less use of high-cost payday, installment, and personal-finance loans and greater access to mainstream credit cards, especially among low-income households. The findings link state safety-net support to the credit options households use to manage financial shortfalls.

Selected Publications, continued



Racism and the mechanisms of educational inequality

W. Carson Byrd · Associate Research Scientist

Rangel, D. E., & Byrd, W. C. (2026). Toward clarifying mechanisms of racism as fundamental causes of educational inequality. *Educational Researcher*, 55(1), 46–54. [doi:10.3102/0013189X251356448](https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X251356448).

David Rangel and W. Carson Byrd propose that education researchers draw on fundamental cause theory to sharpen explanations of racial inequality. Developed in medical sociology, the framework asks whether a durable social cause keeps reproducing unequal outcomes through changing mechanisms and flexible resources. The authors argue it can help researchers specify how racism produces educational disparities rather than treating race as a standalone variable.



College, selection, and intergenerational mobility

Haowen Zheng · Postdoctoral Research Fellow

Zheng, H., Andersen, R., Holm, A., & Karlson, K. B. (2026). Is college really “the” equalizer? New evidence addressing unobserved selection. *Sociological Science*, 13, 242–272. [doi:10.15195/v13.a10](https://doi.org/10.15195/v13.a10).

Haowen Zheng and coauthors revisit the claim that college equalizes labor-market outcomes across family backgrounds. Using an instrumental-variable approach with White male respondents in the 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, they account for unobserved selection into college. After this adjustment, intergenerational mobility is similar among graduates and nongraduates. The authors argue that improving access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds is important if higher education is to reduce inequalities tied to family background.



Finance and the geography of top earnings

Nils Neumann · Doctoral candidate, Sociology

Neumann, N., et al. (2026). Rapid earnings growth in finance concentrates top earnings in a few large cities. *Nature Cities*, 3, 447–457. [doi:10.1038/s44284-026-00407-1](https://doi.org/10.1038/s44284-026-00407-1).

Nils Neumann and coauthors examine why top earnings have become more concentrated in particular cities. Using linked employer–employee records across ten countries, they find that rapid earnings growth in finance contributes to the concentration of top earners in cities where finance jobs cluster. The study identifies sectoral specialization as an important part of the geography of earnings inequality.

A portrait of Alexander Adames, a man with short dark hair, a mustache, and glasses, smiling. He is wearing a dark blue hoodie over a patterned shirt. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

— RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT · INEQUALITY SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

Alexander Adames studies wealth, opportunity, and inequality

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY · CID FACULTY

Alexander Adames, an assistant professor of sociology, studies the causes and consequences of economic stratification in the United States. His research examines wealth, income, and labor market outcomes over the life course and across generations. He joined the Stone Center for Inequality Dynamics as a faculty associate in July 2026.

How do family assets shape college completion?

In one project, Adames examines whether parental homeownership improves children's educational outcomes, a long-standing question in research on mobility and inequality. Some theories argue that homeownership can benefit children by increasing family wealth, encouraging savings, and making parents more invested in their communities.

Adames said his work suggests that researchers should pay closer attention to **liquid assets**, such as bank accounts, brokerage accounts, and retirement savings, which families can more easily use in times of need.

In a paper currently under review, Adames and a co-author evaluate whether children's college completion is more strongly associated with parents' homeownership or parents' liquid-asset poverty. Liquid asset poverty refers to having liquid assets below one-quarter of the poverty line.

The study found that the apparent benefit of parental homeownership disappears after accounting for background characteristics, he explained. By contrast, the negative association between parental liquid-asset poverty and children's college completion remains.

"The findings suggest that parental asset poverty hurts children's college completion," Adames said.

The project is part of Adames' broader research agenda on economic inequality, wealth and mobility. He said wealth is important because it reflects more than income.

"Wealth becomes an indicator of a person's financial security," Adames said. "It is the pool of capital people have to protect themselves."

Who participates in the stock market?

Adames is also developing research on racial differences in stock market participation. He said the question matters because households increasingly bear responsibility for retirement security and financial risk. While homeownership remains a major source of wealth for many families, liquid assets can be more readily used during economic hardship.

He said existing research often focuses on financial literacy or risk aversion, but those explanations raise further questions.

"Why are some people more informed about financial markets than others?" Adames said.

How do earnings and education impact romantic prospects in online dating?

In a separate line of research, Adames studies romantic desirability in online dating. He and collaborators have conducted an experiment using fictional dating profiles to examine how educational prestige, for-profit college attendance, and gendered expectations around earnings shape dating preferences.

The experiment asked participants how likely they would be to "swipe right" on profiles with randomized characteristics. The design allowed researchers to estimate the causal effect of those characteristics on romantic interest.

Adames said the project connects to broader questions about inequality because relationships and family formation are shaped by education, class, and social expectations.

The path to sociology

Adames said his interest in sociology began during his first semester of college, when he took a writing course on social class in America. The course helped him make sense of class differences he had observed growing up in New York City and working as an intern at the American Museum of Natural History.

"Taking sociology classes started to inform what I had been seeing," Adames said. "Talking and writing about inequality seemed really appealing to me."

Adames earned his doctorate in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania, where he was an Institute of Education Sciences predoctoral fellow. He also earned a master's degree in statistics from the Wharton School. He received his bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Virginia.

Adames said research allows him to study questions that have long interested him while using data to examine patterns in social life.

"I liked thinking about inequality and looking at graphs and making sense of data," he said.

"Wealth becomes an indicator of a person's financial security. It is the pool of capital people have to protect themselves."

Fabiana Silva studies how race is seen, measured, and acted upon

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PUBLIC POLICY • CID FACULTY

Fabiana Silva's research often begins with a question that sits at the intersection of sociology and public policy:

How do social categories become consequential?

Growing up in Uruguay, Silva often heard family conversations about economic conditions and why some countries were more prosperous than others. After she moved to the United States as a teenager, her focus shifted toward distributional questions within a wealthier country: Who benefits, who is excluded, and how do institutions reproduce inequality?

Her undergraduate thesis at Harvard, based on interviews with Latino immigrants in Los Angeles, including garment workers, day laborers, and domestic workers, drew her toward sociology's attention to how people interpret their circumstances and make decisions.

“I didn't realize how many assumptions I was making until I started talking to people. They fell apart pretty quickly.”

Silva went on to earn her doctorate in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley, where a workshop in mathematical and analytical sociology connected her with graduate students who shared her interest in causal questions and her sense of what makes evidence convincing. Her current research reflects that combination of broad sociological questions and empirical specificity.



FABIANA SILVA

How do employers value and interpret referrals?

Most people find jobs through personal contacts, and because networks are racially segregated, those contacts are typically of the same race as the jobseeker. Research has therefore focused on access, finding that Black jobseekers are less likely to have someone well-positioned to vouch for them. Silva wanted to know whether referrals, once obtained, might work in Black jobseekers' favor by giving employers individualized information that cuts against negative stereotypes.

“I was hopeful. Black jobseekers have a harder time getting a referral. But I thought the referrals they do get might count for more,” Silva said.

That is not what she found. In her experiment, White employers strongly rewarded White applicants' same-race referrals but dismissed those of Black applicants, even when the employer showed little implicit bias. Black applicants benefited from referrals only when the employee vouching for them was White and the employer had low implicit bias.

A follow-up study helps explain why. Many White employers believe that Black, Latino, and Asian employees prefer to help their own group members rather than recommend the strongest candidate—a belief they rarely hold about White employees. A referral understood as in-group loyalty tells an employer little about whether the applicant is a good fit for the job. Getting a referral matters, but so does what an employer makes of it once you have one.

How do Americans racially classify one another?

Another strand of Silva's work examines “observed race,” or how people are racially classified by others rather than how they identify themselves. The distinction matters because discrimination occurs through perception, yet nearly all the data used to measure inequality and enforce civil rights law relies on self-identification.

Federal statistics have long treated “Hispanic” as an ethnic group that can be of any race, so that a person could be ethnically Hispanic and also racially White, or ethnically Hispanic and racially Black. Silva finds many Americans reject this view: almost half of observers did not classify someone as Hispanic—despite speaking Spanish and having a Spanish name—if that person looked distinctively White or Black.

The reverse happened as well, though less often. Appearance was the strongest cue in whether observers classified someone as White or Black. But name and language cues associated with Hispanic origins lowered the likelihood of being classified as White or Black, even for people whose appearances were perceived as distinctly White or Black.

Silva's broader argument is that the Hispanic category, often described as elusive, has become meaningful and widely understood: Americans agree about classifying a diverse range of people as Hispanic. In becoming established, it appears to have reshaped understandings of Whiteness and Blackness.

Silva is now bringing together her work on classification with her work on discrimination, testing directly whether markers like a Spanish surname change not only how an applicant is racially seen but also how they are treated.

The trouble with civil rights appeals

While Silva's first two lines of work examine how inequality gets produced, the third examines social movements' efforts to build public support for undoing it.

Movements have to convince people that a problem is unjust and worth acting on, and in the United States many reach for the language and imagery of the Civil Rights Movement to make that case. Silva and her collaborators, Irene Bloemraad and Kim Voss, found good reason for the strategy's widespread appeal: Americans across the political spectrum think highly of civil rights and broadly agree about what it means.

And yet the strategy backfires. Describing contemporary problems as civil rights violations consistently reduced support for government intervention—across different issues, different groups of beneficiaries, and different audiences. Liberals and conservatives, Black, White, and Latino respondents all responded negatively.

The problem, Silva suspects, is that the strategy invites a comparison. Say “civil rights” and people think of the idealized Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s—and measured against that, today's problems seem less pressing and today's movements less impressive.

Silva is often surprised by her findings, which she says is part of the point. Experiments, she said, are useful because they can test widely held assumptions and reveal when expected mechanisms do not operate as predicted. Her location in a public policy school also shapes how she thinks about the implications of her research: public policy students and colleagues push her to consider not only why inequality persists, but also what might be done about it.

“So far I've mostly been documenting what doesn't work. Hopefully I'll next figure out what does.”

Grant Updates and Ongoing Research

RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION GRANT

Property-tax burdens by homeowner age and race

Joe LaBriola · Robert Manduca · Pablo Mitnik

A new \$200,000 Russell Sage Foundation grant supports three CID faculty members—Joe LaBriola, Robert Manduca, and Pablo Mitnik—in studying unequal property-tax burdens. The researchers will use nationwide assessed and estimated market values for residential properties in 2019, linked to homeowner information, to examine differences by age and race and the role of assessment caps—limits on increases in a property’s taxable assessed value.

SOCIAL MOBILITY LAB RESEARCH GRANT

Social Mobility Lab award supports Adames’s research on lifetime mobility

Alexander Adames

CID faculty member Alexander Adames was named a 2026-27 Social Mobility Lab research grantee at The City College of New York’s Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership. His project will examine racial and cohort differences in mobility across the life course by developing a lifetime measure and estimating when people first experience upward or downward mobility.

ONGOING RESEARCH

The Wealth and Mobility Study

Pablo Mitnik · Project Director

The Wealth and Mobility Study (WAM), led by project director Pablo Mitnik, is developing estimates of wealth, income, inequality, segregation, and mobility using population-level tax and housing records. Over the past year, WAM has focused on improving family-level wealth measures, including incorporating housing information and refining methods for estimating asset holdings from tax records. This work lays the foundation for population-level estimates of the wealth held by the top 1%, 5%, and 10%, nationally and across subnational geographies, which will enable researchers to examine both wealth concentration within areas and differences across them.

Teaching and Training

Mentorship and training are central to the Stone Center's mission.

66

Graduate students and postdocs

In CID's active community, as of September 2026

16

CID-affiliated students

Who were mentored by or collaborated with CID faculty last year

33

Center events

Held during the past year

Workshops and mentorship

Monthly Early Ideas Workshops give community members a place to present developing projects and receive multidisciplinary feedback.

Research and professional development

In partnership with the Population Studies Center, the Stone Center funded eight students to attend conferences or obtain data.

The Center participates in ISR's Junior Professional Researcher program, a two-year program that embeds recent college graduates considering social science careers in research projects within ISR. The Center's Junior Professional Researcher is Eunice Adjapong.



Photo: Sheila Babbitt



Photo: Erin Kirkland

Student honors

Stone Center student associates and affiliates earned national and university honors. **Jasmine Simington** received the American Sociological Association (ASA) Race, Gender, and Class Section's Best Graduate Student Paper Award and the U-M Ford School's 2026 Peter Eckstein Prize for Interdisciplinary Research and Policy Analysis. She also received the Robert Dentler Student Practitioner Award from the ASA Section on Sociological Practice and Public Sociology. **Abigail Kappelman** received the 2026 Moses Gunn Student Research Award; **Jun Fang** received the Philip Converse and Warren Miller Fellowship in American Political Behavior; and **Myriam Al Bcherraoui** was recognized with an Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) Outstanding Research Mentor Award.

Where they go next



Abigail Kappelman

Completed her PhD and continued her final two years of medical school at U-M.



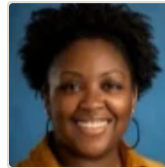
Giovanni Román-Torres

Joined Normandale Community College as a sociology faculty member.



Jiaming Soh

Joined the International Monetary Fund's Economist Program.



Jasmine Simington

Joined CUNY's Stone Center on Socio-Economic Inequality as a postdoctoral scholar.



Meifeng Yang

Joined Analysis Group as an associate.

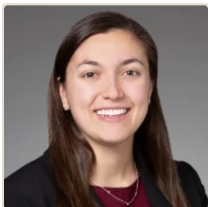


Niaoniao You

Joined the University of Arizona's Economic and Business Research Center as a senior economic forecaster.

2026–27 Emerging Inequality Scholars

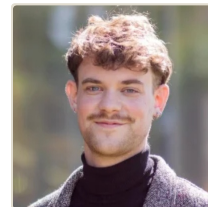
Awards from the Stone Center provided two U-M doctoral students studying inequality a semester of protected time to focus on their independent research.



Kelcie Ferrara-Gerson

PhD candidate · Public Policy and Economics

Ferrara-Gerson studies how student debt shapes household finances and access to homeownership. Using Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia data and changes in underwriting policy, she will investigate how education debt affects mortgage access and wealth building, and whether policy reforms expanded homeownership and affected default risk.



Nils Neumann

PhD candidate · Sociology

Neumann investigates why the wealth benefits of homeownership tend to be smaller for Black and Latino homeowners than for White homeowners. He will analyze whether this disparity can be explained by the concentration of Black and Latino homeowners in metropolitan areas with slower home-value appreciation.

Postdoctoral research

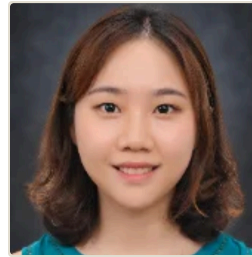


Sarah Farr

*Postdoctoral Research Fellow ·
Department of Health
Management and Policy*

Farr's current research examines privacy and power in smart-home environments by shifting attention from whether individuals choose to adopt connected devices to who is exposed to them through housing arrangements and market conditions. With Chelsea Bruno and Denise Anthony, Farr shows that exposure to smart devices is shaped by housing dynamics, household circumstances, and structural inequalities, not only by individual preferences about technology. The project connects questions of digital privacy to housing and institutional power.

Farr, S., Bruno, C., & Anthony, D. (2026). Privacy and power in the smart home: Housing market conditions and exposure to smart devices in home environments. *Information, Communication & Society*, 1–28. [doi:10.1080/1369118X.2026.2703215](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2026.2703215).



Sae Hyun (Grace) Oh

*Postdoctoral Research Fellow ·
Panel Study of Income
Dynamics*

Oh is collaborating with Pablo Mitnik to develop a method for estimating race and ethnicity in administrative records that lack this information, supporting research on racial and ethnic inequality. Using Census data accessed through a Research Data Center, the team is assessing the method against self-reported race and ethnicity, including testing its performance across geographic scales. This work provides methodological support for WAM, with the collaboration continuing alongside Oh's projects at the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID). At PSID, she is working on AI-assisted processing of open-ended survey responses about self-employment and preparations for the 2029 Child Development Supplement, drawing on her background in economics and child development.

The 2025–26 Speaker Series

The 2025–26 Speaker Series included research on the institutions through which economic advantage is accumulated and sustained. These speakers brought work from fields including economic sociology, political economy, and economics into the Stone Center’s ongoing discussion of inequality.

16

Guest speakers during the past year

SELECTED TALKS FROM 2025–26

SEP 9, 2025

Manuel Schechtl

Rising Wealth Concentration and Disparities in Social Outcomes Across the United States

SEP 16, 2025

Jake Grumbach

Old Money: Campaign Finance and Gerontocracy in the United States

SEP 23, 2025

Vida Maralani

Perceptions of Sex Discrimination by Gender and Race at U.S. Universities, 1994–2014

NOV 11, 2025

Laura Tach

The Cumulative Impact of Federal Place-Based Policies on Neighborhood Inequality, 1990–2019



DEC 9, 2025

Maggie Frye

Theorizing Success in an Unfair Job Market

JAN 13, 2026

John Voorheis

Housing Capital and Intergenerational Mobility in the United States



JAN 14, 2026

Joe LaBriola

The Tax Treatment of Housing as a Source of Racial Inequality



FEB 17, 2026

Ségol Le Guern Herry

Wealth Taxation and Portfolio Allocation

MAR 10, 2026

Shay O'Brien

Kinship Interlocks: How the Intimate Exchange of Wealth, Status, and Power Generates Upper-Class Persistence

MAR 17, 2026

Mo Torres

Inequality or Incompetence? Urban Fiscal Crisis and the Spatial Politics of Blame

MAR 24, 2026

Doron Shiffer-Sebba

The Family Office: Wealth Elite and their Family Management



APR 9, 2026

Darrick Hamilton

Power, Purpose and the Color of Wealth: An Economic Vision that Centers People and the Environments in Which We Live

Large photo: a Speaker Series seminar at the Institute for Social Research. Photo: Sheila Babbitt.

Smaller photos: speakers at the SWIPE conference on Measuring and Theorizing Structural Racism. Photos: Melissa Bora



CAPSTONE CONFERENCE • APRIL 10, 2026

Measuring and Theorizing Structural Racism

On April 10, 2026, the Stone Working Group on Inequality and Political Economy (SWIPE), led by Jeremy Levine and co-organized by Davon Norris, convened “Measuring and Theorizing Structural Racism.” The conference examined how researchers connect accounts of historical and institutional processes to the measures they use and the

interpretations they draw from evidence.

The event brought together more than 80 scholars from U-M and other institutions.

Three sessions addressed Theory, Empirics, and Narrative. The program considered how definitions of structural racism guide empirical research, how measures vary across places and institutions, and how researchers communicate findings without losing their historical and theoretical meaning.



SESSION 1

Theory



SESSION 2

Empirics



SESSION 3

Narrative

Sponsored by the Gates Foundation.

Awards



Abigail Kappelman

2026 Susan B. Meister Award for Best Paper in Child Health Policy

Awarded by the Susan B. Meister Child Health Evaluation and Research Center (CHEAR) for “The Influence of Maternal Life Course Exposure to Neighborhood Affluence and Disadvantage on Black/White Disparities in Adverse Birth Outcomes in South Carolina,” coauthored with Annie Ro, Lindsay K. Admon, Belinda L. Needham, and Nancy L. Fleischer and published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*.



Analidis Ochoa

2026 John F. Longres Award in Psychology or Sociology

Awarded by the University of Michigan School of Social Work.



Myriam Al Bcherraoui

Outstanding Research Mentor Award, 2025–26

Hagen-Stevenson Dissertation Research Award, 2026

The Outstanding Research Mentor Award is from U-M’s Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program; the Hagen-Stevenson Dissertation Research Award is from U-M’s Department of Psychology.



Jeremy Levine

2026 James F. Short Jr. Distinguished Article Award

From ASA's Section on Crime, Law, and Deviance, for “Whose Victimization Pays? Policing Innocent Victimhood in Victim Compensation Law,” published in *Law & Society Review*.



Robert Manduca

Honorable mentions • Jane Addams Article Award and Granovetter Award for Best Article in Economic Sociology

“Tax Base Fragmentation as a Dimension of Metropolitan Inequality,” coauthored with Brian Highsmith and Jacob Waggoner and published in *Socio-Economic Review*, received two honorable mentions: the Jane Addams Article Award from ASA’s Community and Urban Sociology Section and the Granovetter Award for Best Article in Economic Sociology from ASA’s Economic Sociology Section.



Pablo Mitnik

2026 Significant Scholarship Award

Awarded jointly to Mitnik, Victoria Bryant, and David Grusky by the International Sociological Association’s Research Committee 28 on Social Stratification and Mobility for “A Very Uneven Playing Field: Economic Mobility in the United States,” published in the *American Journal of Sociology*.

Media Highlights

Four examples of Stone Center research reaching public audiences.

36

Media mentions

During the past year



The Conversation

Alexandra Killewald explained research with Therese Bay-Smidt Christensen on how public transfers offset much of Danish mothers' cumulative earnings losses. The February 2026 essay was republished by outlets including *Fortune* and *The Independent*.

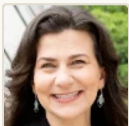
[The Conversation article →](#)



International Business Times

An August 25, 2026, article on retirement-account rollovers cited Asher Dvir-Djerassi's research on how transfers from workplace plans contribute to the growth of individual retirement accounts.

[International Business Times article →](#)



Newsweek

In August 2026, *Newsweek* covered research coauthored by Noura Insolera linking food insecurity in later life with higher odds of probable dementia.

[U-M coverage record →](#)



New York Focus

In June 2026, *New York Focus* cited Jeremy Levine's research on racial disparities in victim-compensation decisions in its reporting on the Survivors First Act. The story used his analysis to explain how "contributory conduct" rules can shape who receives compensation.

[New York Focus article →](#)

The 2026–27 Speaker Series

Twelve talks across Fall 2026 and Winter 2027, held at the ISR Thompson Building and free and open to the U-M community. Schedule as of **October 1, 2026**.

FALL 2026

TUE
29
SEP

TOM VANHEUVELEN

University of Minnesota

A (Lottery) Ticket to the Middle Class: The Changing Structure of Downside Risk Among American College Graduates

THU
15
OCT

BASIT ZAFAR

University of Michigan

Subjective Divorce Risk, Perceived Outside Options, and Intra-Household Allocation

WED
21
OCT

JORDAN CONWELL

University of Texas at Austin

A Great Equalizer for All? Race, Educational Attainment, and Income Mobility across Three Generations

Hosted by CID and PSID; co-sponsored by Sociology.

THU
29
OCT

DAVID BRADY

University of Southern California

Health Insurance, the Affordable Care Act and Black-White Inequalities in Poverty

THU
5
NOV

ZACHARY BLEEMER

Princeton University

Affirmative Action and Racial Integration

Presented with U-M Economics as part of the Labor Economics Seminar.

THU
19
NOV

S. MICHAEL GADDIS

Georgia State University

Missing Results of Discrimination: A Meta-Analysis of Racial, Gender, and Intersectional Discrimination Using Correspondence Audits

WINTER 2027

THU
21
JAN

SIWEI CHENG

New York University

Who Talks to Whom? Understanding Group Boundaries and Network Hierarchies in Informal Interactions at Academic Conferences Using Thousands of Images

THU
4
FEB

NAFEESA ANDRABI

University of Michigan

Title to be announced

THU
25
FEB

ADINA STERLING

Columbia University

This Is Why I Leave: Race and Voluntary Turnover

THU
4
MAR

LANE KENWORTHY

University of California San Diego

The Good City in the Good Society

THU
1
APR

PHILIP GARBODEN

University of Chicago

American Landlord: Landlord-Tenant Conflict and the Absent State

WED
14
APR

ELLORA DERENONCOURT

Princeton University

Title to be announced

Presented with U-M Economics as part of the Labor Economics Seminar.

CURRENT EVENTS LINEUP

bit.ly/CIDevents



EVENT SERIES • FALL 2026 – WINTER 2028

Whose Democracy?

In Fall 2026, the Stone Working Group on Inequality and Political Economy launched a two-year series examining how wealth, class, geography, and race shape democratic power. The series opened with a conversation on political candidacy and builds toward a capstone conference in Winter 2028.

1 WHO RUNS? Candidacy and Class

SEPTEMBER 17, 2026

Noam Lupu · Vanderbilt University · Nick Carnes · Duke University
· Moderated by Roberto Carlos · University of Michigan

In a conversation moderated by Roberto Carlos of the University of Michigan, Noam Lupu of Vanderbilt University and Nick Carnes of Duke University discussed who seeks public office, how class shapes candidate viability, and who ultimately governs.

Carnes and Lupu coauthored the American Academy of Arts and Sciences report *How to Elect More Working-Class Americans and Why It Matters* and cochaired its Working-Class Candidates Working Group.



STILL TO COME

2 WHO FUNDS? Money in Politics

MARCH 25, 2027

Adam Bonica · Stanford University

3 WHO COUNTS? Racial Gerrymandering

FALL 2027

Kevin Morris · Brennan Center for Justice

4 CAPSTONE CONFERENCE

WINTER 2028

Acknowledgments

The Stone Center for Inequality Dynamics is grateful to the James M. and Cathleen D. Stone Foundation for its sustained support of the Center's research and training.

We also thank our partners across the Institute for Social Research and the University of Michigan; the Center's visitors; and the faculty, postdoctoral fellows, students, and staff who make up the Stone Center community.

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Produced by CID Communications

Reporting period: September 1, 2025–August 31, 2026

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UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN