

**CHRISTOPHER ROBERT**  
<http://scholar.harvard.edu/crobert>  
[chris\\_robert@hksphd.harvard.edu](mailto:chris_robert@hksphd.harvard.edu)

**Office Contact Information**

Mailbox 27, 79 JFK Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
Cell: +1-617-807-0794

**Home Contact Information**

138A Irving Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
Cell: +1-617-807-0794

**Undergraduate Studies:**

A.B., Public Policy, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Highest Honors, 2006

**Graduate Studies:**

Masters, Public Policy, Harvard University, 2008

Ph.D., Public Policy, Harvard University, 2012

Dissertation Title: "Wealth, Welfare, and Well-being: Essays on Indebtedness and Normative Analysis"

Dissertation Committee: Richard Zeckhauser, Rohini Pande, Asim Khwaja

**Teaching and Research Fields:**

Primary fields: Development economics, applied microeconomics, policy analysis

**Teaching Experience:**

Fall 2013	<i>Policy Analysis</i> , Kennedy School graduate course (MPP required), adjunct lecturer
Fall 2012	<i>Quantitative Methods and Empirical Analysis</i> , Kennedy School graduate course (MPP required), adjunct lecturer
Spring 2010	<i>Economic Development: Theory, Policy, and Evidence</i> , Kennedy School graduate course, teaching fellow for Professors Rohini Pande and Dani Rodrik
Fall 2008-09	<i>Analytic Frameworks for Public Policy</i> , Kennedy School graduate course, teaching fellow for Professor Richard Zeckhauser
Spring 1997	<i>Java Programming</i> , School Board of Broward County adult education course, instructor

**Fellowships and Research Grants:**

2008-12	Harvard Kennedy School Doctoral Fellowship, Graduate Society Merit Fellowship, Graduate Society Dissertation Completion Fellowship
2011-	Research grant from Agricultural Technology Adoption Initiative (joint with Rohini Pande and Erica Field)
2009-10	Research grants from Harvard University's Center for International Development, Empowerment Lab, Weatherhead Center, Institute for Quantitative Social Science, South Asia Initiative, and Graduate Student Council

**Publications:**

Robert, Christopher and Zeckhauser, Richard (2011), The Methodology of Normative Policy Analysis. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 30: 613–643.

Policy analyses frequently clash. Their disagreements stem from many sources, including models, empirical estimates, and values such as who should have standing and how different criteria should be weighted. We provide a simple taxonomy of disagreement, identifying distinct categories within both the positive and values domains of normative policy analysis. Using disagreements in climate policy to illustrate, we demonstrate how illuminating the structure of disagreement helps to clarify the way forward. We conclude by suggesting a structure for policy analysis that can facilitate assessment, comparison, and debate by laying bare the most likely sources of disagreement.

## **Research Papers:**

“Wealth and Well-being: Lessons from Indian Debt Relief” (under review)

A fundamental prediction of economic theory is that greater wealth causes greater well-being. This paper tests that prediction. It uses a natural experiment to estimate the causal effect of income on subjective well-being. Among a population of indebted farmers in rural India, the marginal effect of income on life satisfaction is found to be positive. However, the source of income appears to exert an important and independent effect. In this study the source is debt relief, which features a positive marginal effect but also a countervailing negative effect (perhaps due to stigma).

“Moral Hindrance: Sub-optimal Risk Under Excessive Liability” (under review)

While economists have tended to focus on moral hazard, it is the opposite problem of moral hindrance that is far more likely to plague low-income credit markets. This is the central argument of this paper, supported by a rather straightforward application of economic theory. The total cost of default borne by borrowers, including social, psychological, and other non-appropriable forms of sanction, is likely to be excessive, giving rise to sub-optimal risk-taking and excessive effort on the part of borrowers. Because non-appropriable forms of sanction are strictly less efficient than pledged collateral, sanctions that induce first-best effort are already too high. Unfortunately, public and policy focus on minimizing interest rates has the effect of ratcheting up these sanctions, doing much harm to borrower welfare in the process. Policy should rather promote competition among lenders, encourage broader use of collateral, and allow interest rates to rise as necessary to meet borrower demand for varying loan conditions.

## **Presentations:**

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| 2011/12 | Northeast Universities Development Consortium (NEUDC) conference, University of Pretoria, Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (University of Cape Town), Institute for Financial Management and Research (Chennai, India) |
| 2010    | BREAD-Verona-Trento Summer Workshop in Development Economics, Association for Social Economics World Congress, Society for Benefit Cost Analysis Annual Conference, Institute for Financial Management and Research (Chennai, India)       |

## **Professional Experience:**

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|-----------|--|
| 2012-     | Harvard Kennedy School: Adjunct lecturer and research associate        |
| 2012-     | Dobility, Inc.: President & CEO  |
| 2007      | United Nations Development Programme: Intern (Bhutan)                  |
| 2002-04   | Various NGO's: Technology and program evaluation consultant (Cambodia) |
| 1999      | Educate the Children: English teacher (Nepal)                          |
| 1996-2002 | ion interactive, inc.: Founding partner, CTO, and consultant           |
| 1991-96   | Galacticomm, Inc.: Software engineer to CTO and board member           |
| 1989-90   | Galactic Innovations: Software engineer (concurrent with high school)  |