

## **Admission to Selective Schools, Alphabetically**

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### **Non-Technical Summary**

One's position in an alphabetically sorted list may be important in determining access to rationed goods or oversubscribed public services. Motivated by anecdotal evidence, we investigate the importance of the position in the alphabet of the last name initial of Czech students for their admission chances into oversubscribed schools. Empirical evidence based on the population of students applying to universities in 1999 suggests that, among marginal applicants, moving from the top to the bottom of the alphabet decreases admission chances by over 2%. The implication of such admission procedures for student ability sorting across differently oversubscribed schools is then confirmed by evidence based on a national survey of secondary students' test scores.

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