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Personal Information: US Citizenship

Prior Studies:

Bachelor of Arts, Economics and Computer Science with Distinction, Williams College,
Valedictorian, Summa Cum Laude, 2015

Doctoral Studies:

Harvard University 2015-present
Ph.D. Candidate in Economics
Thesis Title: Essays in Personnel and Public Economics
Expected Completion Date: May 2021

References:

Professor Claudia Goldin Harvard University 617-495-3934, cgoldin@harvard.edu	Professor Nathaniel Hendren Harvard University 773-344-8990, nhendren@fas.harvard.edu
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Professor Lawrence Katz
Harvard University
617- 495-5148, lkatz@harvard.edu

Teaching and Research Fields:

Fields: Labor, Public, Behavioral

Teaching Experience:

2017-2020	“Graduate Public Finance,” TF for Nathaniel Hendren
2017	“Graduate Psychology and Economic Theory,” TF for Matthew Rabin

Research Experience:

Summer 2016	Research Assistant for Jerry Green
Summer 2015	Research Assistant for Amanda Pallais

Professional Activities

Referee *Quarterly Journal of Economics, Journal of Urban Economics*

Mentor Harvard Economics Graduate Peer Mentor

Honors, Scholarships, and Fellowships:

2020	Lab for Economic Applications and Policy Grant, <i>with Natalia Emanuel</i>
2019	Bradley Foundation Grant
2018	Lab for Economic Applications and Policy Grant, <i>with N. Emanuel & H. Shaffer</i>
17/18	Harvard Distinction in Teaching Award in Fall 2017 and Spring 2018
2016	Stone Fellowship in Inequality
2015	Valedictorian, Williams College Sam Goldberg Award for best thesis in computer science

Research Papers:

[“Working Remotely?’ Selection and Treatment Effects of Remote Work and Its Market Provision” with Natalia Emanuel \(Job Market Paper\)](#)

Why was remote work rare prior to Covid-19? Will workers return to the office after the pandemic? Our paper specifically asks whether adverse selection made remote work initially rare and whether it will eventually drive workers back to the office. We consider these questions in the context of call-center workers, using data from a Fortune 500 online retailer that hires both remote and on-site workers. We find remote work improves individual productivity but worsens worker selection. We see the positive treatment effect in the sharp 5% increase in call volumes around individual switches to remote work in 2018 and 2019. Similarly, when the entire on-site workforce went remote after Covid-19, the productivity of formerly on-site workers rose by 5-10% relative to their already remote peers. Nevertheless, remote workers answered 8% fewer calls and earned 8% lower wages than on-site workers before the pandemic. Even at an 8% wage penalty, however, remote workers benefited from working remotely. The retailer hired remote workers in places where the retailer's uniform \$14/hr remote wage was far below those of local on-site options: this implies some workers had a high willingness to pay for remote work and the average remote worker enjoyed a surplus of \$1.48/hr (10.6% of wages). If the retailer priced remote work according to its positive treatment effect rather than its negative aggregate effect, more of the retailer's workers would work remotely and social surplus from remote work would rise by 32%. Barring any change in these treatment and selection effects, our analysis implies adverse selection will drive most call-center workers back to the office, even though it would be socially efficient for more to remain remote.

[“The Payoffs of Higher Pay: Elasticities of Productivity and Labor Supply with Respect to Wages” with Natalia Emanuel](#)

Firm wage-setting trades off the potential benefits of higher wages --- including increased productivity, decreased turnover, and enhanced recruitment --- against their direct costs. We estimate productivity and labor supply elasticities with respect to wages among warehouse and call-center workers in a Fortune 500 retailer. To identify these elasticities, we use rigidities in the firm's pay setting policies that create heterogeneity relative to a changing outside option, as well as discrete jumps when the firm recalibrates pay. We find evidence of labor market frictions that can give firms wage-setting power: we estimate moderately large, but finite, turnover elasticities (-3 to -4) and recruitment elasticities (3 to 4.5). In addition, we find productivity responses to higher pay in excess of \$1. By comparing warehouse workers'

responses to higher wages both across workers and within the same worker, we find that over half of the turnover reductions and productivity increases arise from behavioral responses as opposed to compositional differences. Our results suggest historical pay increases are consistent with optimizing behavior. However, these aggregate patterns mask heterogeneity. For example, women's productivity responds more to wages than men's, while women's turnover is less responsive than men's, which can lead to occupational wage differences.

“Estimating Prosecutor Skill at Criminal Sentencing” with Hannah Shaffer

In criminal courts, prosecutors have considerable discretion over defendant's sentencing, suggesting skilled prosecutors may be able to reduce both incarceration and future crime. Leveraging the quasi-random assignment of low-level felonies in North Carolina Superior Court, we find that prosecutors vary in their effects on both incarceration and re-offense. Since differences across prosecutors in their re-offense effects cannot be fully explained by their incarceration effects, prosecutors vary in their “skill” — the degree to which they selectively incarcerate those defendants most likely to re-offend. Indeed, prosecutors who are one standard deviation above the mean achieve a 2pp (8%) lower rate of re-offense than one would expect given their incarceration effect.

Research Papers in Progress

“Smudges: Employment Signals in Criminal Background Checks” with Natalia Emanuel

We use data from a national staffing agency to compare the predictive content of criminal background checks to that of other signals that an employer observes about prospective employees. Even when managers are blind to criminal records that do not disqualify the candidate from the job, such a record does signal that the worker is less likely to complete the temporary assignment and receive a favorable review from the manager. However, the negative signal of a criminal record is more than outweighed by having completed a temporary assignment in the past. Our evidence suggests that prior work experience should outweigh criminal records when managers make hiring decisions. In our ongoing work, we highlight particular types of convictions that do not contain insight about workers' productivity and what types of prior convictions may have particularly racially disparate impacts in the labor market.

“Rules and Discretion in the Criminal Justice System” with Hannah Shaffer

In many state criminal courts, guidelines prescribe mandatory sentencing for many defendants. However, discretion eliminated at sentencing may reappear in charging, as prosecutors adjust a defendant's arrest charge to side-step mandatory sentencing rules. We assess the extent to which prosecutors behaviorally respond to sentencing rules and the beneficiaries from their discretion. Our context is North Carolina Superior Court, where an institutional feature of the sentencing guidelines gives us purchase on prosecutors' behavioral response to these rules. At certain criminal history cutoffs, the guidelines discontinuously shift from discretionary to mandatory incarceration. We find that prosecutors are more likely to reduce the arresting charge in cases that would otherwise be subject to mandatory incarceration. In our setting, such charge reductions undo 40% of the mechanical increase in incarceration rates around these discontinuities. We find that defendants whose observable characteristics suggest a low risk of re-offense are more likely to receive charge reductions, suggesting prosecutors' behavioral responses to the guidelines helps to reserve incarceration for those more likely to re-offend.

Determinants of Racial Disparities in Prosecutors' Charging Decisions with Hannah Shaffer, William Murdock III, and Natalia Emanuel

We explore to what extent institutional discrimination contributes to observed racial disparities in prosecutors' cases. To assess this, we link prosecutor survey responses to administrative records from North Carolina's Superior Court. Our survey presents prosecutors with hypothetical cases to test how prosecutors (consciously or unconsciously) respond to past actions of police and statutes that have disparate impact on black men, while holding fixed true defendant conduct. By linking our survey results to administrative data, we test whether prosecutors' responses predict their historical charging decisions. This allows us to quantify how much racial gaps in prosecutors' charging decisions are influenced by these up-stream disparities.

Biased Beliefs in the Criminal Justice System with Hannah Shaffer, William Murdock III, and Natalia Emanuel

Prosecutors have considerable discretion over defendant outcomes in criminal courts and aim to apply their discretion to reserve incarceration for those who are more likely to re-offend. However, it is unclear whether they have accurate beliefs about the correlates of re-offense. In a survey of over 100 prosecutors in North Carolina, we find that prosecutors have systematically biased beliefs about how age and prior criminal history relate to re-offense. Prosecutors underestimate the likelihood of criminal re-offense among young offenders and overestimate the likelihood of criminal re-offense among those with long criminal histories. In future work, we will link these beliefs and the extent of each prosecutor's inaccuracies to court records to investigate how prosecutors' beliefs relate to the outcomes in their cases.

Prior Publications

Scalping Scalpers or Consumers? The proposed BOSS Act threatens the consumer-friendly evolution of secondary ticket markets. *Regulation*, Fall 2012, 18-25 (with David Harrington).

Initial Opioid Supply Influences Long-Term Use and Doctor Shopping: An Instrumental Variables Approach *American College of Surgeons*, Fall 2018 (with Matthew Basilico and Abhiram Bashyam).

Racial disparities in opioid re-prescription for musculoskeletal trauma surgery. *American College of Surgeons*, Fall 2019 (with Matthew Basilico and Abhiram Bashyam)