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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

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	<i>Quarterly Journal of Economics, Journal of Urban Economics</i>
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Mentor Harvard Economics Graduate Peer Mentor

Honors, Scholarships, and Fellowships:

2020	Donald M. Ephraim Prize in Law and Economics at the University of
2020	Chicago Law School
	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
2016	Russell Sage Foundation Summer Institute in Behavioral Economics
2015	Valedictorian, Williams College
	Computing Research Association (CRA) Award for Outstanding Research Potential in Computing
	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 so rare prior to Covid-19's lockdown? One possibility is that working remotely reduces productivity. Another is that remote work attracts unobservably less productive workers. In our setting of call-center workers at a Fortune 500 retailer, two natural experiments reveal positive productivity effects of remote work. When Covid-19 closed down the retailer's on-site call-centers, a difference-in-difference design suggests the transition from on-site to remote work increased the productivity of formerly on-site workers by 8% to 10% relative to their already remote peers. Similarly, when previously on-site workers took up opportunities to go remote in 2018-2019, their productivity rose by 7%. These two natural experiments also reveal negative selection into remote work. While all workers were remote due to Covid-19, those who were hired into remote jobs were 12% less productive than those hired into on-site jobs. Extending remote opportunities to on-site workers similarly attracts less productive workers to on-site jobs. Our model allows us to characterize the counterfactual in which remote workers were not adversely selected. Without adverse selection, the retailer would have hired 57% more remote workers and worker surplus from remote work would have been 32% greater. Given the central role of selection, Covid-19's effect on remote work will persist if the lockdown disproportionately causes more productive workers to be willing to work remotely.

“*The Payoffs of Higher Pay: Elasticities of Productivity and Labor Supply with Respect to Wages*” *with Natalia Emanuel*

What do firms gain from raising pay for low-wage workers? Focusing on a Fortune 500 retailer, we estimate the impact of higher wages on employee productivity, turnover, and recruitment among warehouse and call-center workers, using the quasi-randomness induced by sticky wage-setting policies. We document finite wage elasticities of turnover (between -3.0 and -4.5) and recruitment (between 3.2 and 4.2), which suggest the firm has some wage-setting power. Yet, on the margin, raising wages by \$1 increases productivity by more than \$1, giving the firm an incentive to pay more, even if they could pay lower wages. These responses to pay emerge both

in a setting where the firm discretely raised wages and in a setting where its wages remained constant while other firms raised pay. These effects reflect both changes in worker selection and changes in behavior of existing workers. We estimate that over half of the turnover reductions and productivity increases arise from changes in workers' behavior. Finally, our estimates suggest considerable gender heterogeneity: Men's turnover is more responsive to higher wages than women's. But turnover effects are swamped by women's stronger productivity response to higher pay. Together, the gender-specific elasticities suggest firms have an implicit incentive to set female wages above male wages and thus firm profits cannot explain the gender pay gap.

“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 Bhashyam).

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