CARL J. MCPHERSON

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BUSINESS ADDRESS:
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DESIRED RESEARCH AND TEACHING FIELDS:

PRIMARY	SECONDARY
Public Finance	Applied Econometrics
Labor Economics	

FIELDS OF CONCENTRATION:
Public Finance, Labor Economics

DISSERTATION TITLE: "Essays in Government Policy and Migration"

Expected Date of Completion:	May 2025
Principal Advisor:	Professor Danny Yagan
Other References:	Professors Emmanuel Saez and Enrico Moretti

PRE-DOCTORAL STUDIES:

	DEGREE	DATE	FIELD
Williams College	B.A.	2014	Economics with honors, *cum laude*

WORKING AND PUBLISHED PAPERS:

- How Magnetic Can Welfare Be? **[Job Market Paper]**

  Twenty states expanded Medicaid eligibility to low-income childless adults in 2014. Did this large and costly expansion of state-level welfare attract these newly-eligible adults to expansion states? By merging administrative tax records, Medicaid enrollment records and survey data, I find that 4.7% of these adults move interstate annually, over twice the rate reported in the Current Population Survey. Nevertheless, both state-level and border-county difference-in-differences designs yield no statistically significant impact of Medicaid on migration over the first five years. These estimates are precise enough to reject substantial budgetary or welfare costs or benefits from migration. In contrast, I find that the same subpopulation migrated substantially in response to Great Recession local shocks. This appears difficult to reconcile with the value of Medicaid. However, it may be explained by the fact that a newly-eligible adult gains less than 2 years of Medicaid enrollment in the 5 years after moving to an expansion state, or by the confusion about enrollment that I document in survey data. Regardless of the explanation, the welfare magnet effect of Medicaid expansion was negligible.

- The Impact of Incarceration on Employment, Earnings, and Tax Filing
  (with A. Garin, D. Koustas, S. Norris, M. Pecenco, E.K. Rose, Y. Shem-Tov and J. Weaver)
  Conditionally Accepted at Econometrica

  We study the effect of incarceration on wages, self-employment, and taxes and transfers in North Carolina and Ohio using two quasi-experimental research designs: discontinuities in sentencing guidelines and random assignment to judges. Across both states, incarceration generates short-term drops in economic activity while individuals remain in prison. As a result, a year-long sentence decreases cumulative earnings over five years by 13%. Beyond five years, however, there is no evidence of lower employment, wage earnings, or self-employment in either state, as well as among defendants with no prior incarceration history. These results suggest that upstream factors, such as other types of criminal justice interactions or pre-existing labor market detachment, are more likely to be the cause of low earnings among the previously incarcerated, who we estimate would earn $5,000 per year on average if spared a prison sentence.

- Minimum Wage Effects and Monopsony Explanations
  (with J. Wiltshire [lead author], M. Reich and D. Sosinskiy)
  Conditionally Accepted at Journal of Labor Economics

  We present the first causal analysis of a seven-year run-up of minimum wages to $15. Using a novel stacked county-level synthetic control estimator and data on fast-food restaurants, we find substantial pay growth and no disemployment. Our results hold among lower-wage counties and counties without local minimum wages. Minimum wage increases reduce separation rates and raise wages faster than prices at McDonald's stores; both findings imply a monopsonistic labor market

with declining rents. In the tight post-pandemic labor market, when labor supply becomes more elastic, we find positive employment effects. These become larger and statistically significant after addressing pandemic-response confounds.

- Is New Platform Work Different than Other Freelancing?
  (with A. Garin, E. Jackson and D. Koustas)
  AEA Papers and Proceedings (2020)

  The rise of freelance work in the online platform economy (OPE) has received considerable media and policy attention in recent years, but freelance work is by no means a new phenomenon. In this paper, we draw on I.R.S. tax records to identify instances when workers begin doing online platform work versus other freelance/independent contractor "gig" work for firms. We find gig work occurs around major reductions in outside income, and document usage over the lifecycle. Our results provide suggestive evidence on motivations for entering into each type of work.

SELECTED WORKS IN PROGRESS:

- The Effects of the ACA on Job Lock and Mortality: Evidence from Tax Data
  (with D. Koustas , I. Lurie and R. Kaestner)
  IRS Approved Project. Presented at the 2023 NTAs

  Health insurance availability may affect work choices—often referred to as "job lock"—and is an important determinant of health. The Affordable Care Act in 2014 expanded insurance coverage via Medicaid expansions and the establishment of subsidized marketplaces, thus weakening the link between health insurance and employment. We study the effects of these policies, exploiting variation in the timing of expansions across states and using rich IRS longitudinal microdata. The universe of tax records allows us to estimate precise effects on a range of outcomes, including earnings, self-employment, job transitions, mortality, mobility and tax filing behavior. We examine heterogeneity by insurance status prior to 2014, including low-income wage earners and the self-employed without spousal coverage who would have benefited most from the policy change, as well as by income, age and gender.

- Implicit Insurance for Job Loss in the United States
  (with S. Kancherla and M. Unrath)
  Census Approved Project

  We study the joint effects of the tax system, government transfers, and self-insurance in mitigating earnings losses from job loss. Transfer payments imply smaller income losses relative to wage losses; behavioral responses (asset liquidation, self-employment, income misreporting, family members' labor supply) mitigate household income losses relative to worker income losses; and progressive tax rates imply smaller after-tax income losses relative to pre-tax income losses. We leverage a novel merge between social safety net benefit takeup in 42 US states to population tax returns and earnings data to estimate these various margins of response in a single dataset. In doing so, we will be able to integrate the tax system, transfer payments, and household responses into a net measure of household and government insurance against job loss.

- Who Gives to Whom? Charitable Giving in the United States
  (with J. Brounstein, S. Kancherla, S. Karol, C. Landais, M. Muñoz and D. Reck)
  IRS Approved Project

SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES:

2024	University of Victoria Department Seminar, UC Berkeley (Public Finance, Labor/Public Symposium)
2023	National Tax Association, UC Berkeley (Public Finance x2)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

RESEARCH:
Research Assistant for Michael Reich, U.C. Berkeley / Institute for Research on Labor and Employment (2021-2022)
Research Assistant for Andrew Garin and Dmitri Koustas, University of Chicago (2019-2020)
Predoctoral Research Assistant for Emmanuel Saez and Danny Yagan, Opportunity Insights (2016-2018)

TEACHING:
U.C. Berkeley
Reader, Graduate Student Instructor Pedagogy Workshop (Fall 2022, Spring 2023)
Graduate Student Instructor, Undergraduate Public Economics (Fall 2020, Spring 2021)
Williams College
Teaching Assistant, Econometrics (Fall 2013)
Teaching Assistant, Macroeconomics (Spring 2012)

NON-ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE:
Associate Analyst, NERA Economic Consulting (2014-2016)

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS:
2024   Dissertation Completion Fellowship, UC Berkeley
2023   Institute for Research on Labor and Employment Dissertation Fellowship,
               Robert D. Burch Center for Tax Policy & Public Finance Fellowship
2021   Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award
2014   Carl Van Duyne Prize (Undergraduate Thesis Award)

ACADEMIC SERVICE
Undergraduate Student Mentor, U.C. Berkeley (2019-2022)
Social Science Pedagogy Workshop Lead (Fall 2021, Fall 2022)

AFFILIATIONS
Student Volunteer, Internal Revenue Service, Research and Statistics Division (2018-present)
Special Sworn Status, US Census Bureau (2023-present)

OTHER INFORMATION:
Languages: English
Citizenship: United States