

## Research Statement

Providing research that is policy centered, asks important questions, and is both quantitatively and qualitatively credible is central to my goals as a scholar. Throughout my academic career, I have developed skills in finding unique data, implementing modern causal analysis techniques, collaborating with other scholars, and presenting research findings in a clear, professional manner. My research agenda focuses on policies that have large welfare impacts to individuals and specifically focuses on finding solutions to issues of inequality.

### My Research Skills and Philosophy

Great research begins by finding important and attainable research questions. I believe the most valuable research questions identify societal issues at their source, show the efficacy of policy solutions, or highlight inefficiencies or inequity in current systems. These types of research questions are often difficult to answer due to data limitations and selection issues relating to policy timing or program take-up. In accordance with this, I have focused on gathering unique data that can add substantial contributions to the research literature in question and honing empirical skills and techniques to provide reliable causal effects.

In almost every major research project I have worked on I have utilized some restricted, administrative, or unique data set. Gathering non-public data takes initiative, determination, and creativity. I have found that investing in data acquisition always pays off by allowing for better contributions to research areas and increasing the types of questions that can be asked within a given research topic. In my future projects, I plan on continuing to use unique data currently in my possession and finding new sources of rich, descriptive data.

No one empirical method or approach can be used to provide causal analysis for every question. Rather, a variety of tools are needed depending on the context of the research question and the availability of data. Because of this, I strive to have strong skills in using a wide variety of different methods and techniques. In my work as a scholar, I have conducted studies using regression discontinuity designs, bunching techniques, difference in difference designs, two stage least squares estimation, and even machine learning to predict specific first-stage behavior based on observables. My practice and experience with each of these methods allows me to adapt quickly and apply causal analysis to a variety of different

settings.

Finally, great research can only be useful when it is clear, understandable, and easily applied. In my work as a scholar, I strive to present my work in a manner that is generally understood to a wider audience without sacrificing precision, accuracy, or rigor. Within my primary field of study, the US criminal justice system, institutional details surrounding legal proceedings are often technical and confusing. I focus on explaining such details in a way that is concise and helps the reader understand the setting within context of the greater research question. I especially pride myself in being an engaging presenter who explains concepts well to diverse audiences.

## **My Research Agenda**

My research agenda focuses broadly on crime and criminal proceedings within the United States justice system. Recent criminal justice literature and my own work has shown the importance prosecutor discretion can have on outcomes for defendants. In my future research I plan on generating work that relates to policies that impact prosecutor choice and incentives. This area of research is still young, but current work suggests that policies impacting prosecutor choice may be one of the most effective tools in impacting sentence lengths, recidivism, and inequality. The unique data set of US Attorneys I collected for my job market paper opens the door for several more studies investigating how positions of power over prosecutors impact defendant outcomes. This line of research is extremely thin and may have significant impacts on our understanding of prosecutor incentives.

More specifically, I seek to continue in pursuing research related to inequality in the courts; especially racial inequality. As the literature on discrimination in law enforcement, prosecution, and criminal judgement grows, the evidence of severe mistreatment and unequal outcomes against Black individuals becomes more clearly and broadly identified. In my research, I aim to assess policy solutions for reducing racial disparities within legal systems. I believe that the most valuable research on inequality that can be conducted at this time is considering which actions can be taken by individuals, communities, state legislatures, or federal districts to reduce unequal and discriminatory treatment. It is these types of studies that I seek to work on moving forward in my work as an economic and legal scholar.