

**Rebecca Royer**  
ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

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### CONTACT INFORMATION

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### EDUCATION

PhD Candidate in Economics, University of California San Diego, expected completion 06/2024  
Committee: James Andreoni (Co-chair), Gordon Dahl (Co-chair), Sally Sadoff, Anya Samek, and Emanuel Vespa  
B.S. in Mathematics and Economics, American University, Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa, 2015

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### REFERENCES

James Andreoni, Professor of Economics, UC San Diego, [jandreoni@ucsd.edu](mailto:jandreoni@ucsd.edu)  
Gordon Dahl, Professor of Economics, UC San Diego, [gdahl@ucsd.edu](mailto:gdahl@ucsd.edu)  
Emanuel Vespa, Associate Professor of Economics, UC San Diego, [evespa@ucsd.edu](mailto:evespa@ucsd.edu)  
Anya Samek, Associate Professor of Economics and Strategy, UC San Diego, [asamek@ucsd.edu](mailto:asamek@ucsd.edu)

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### FIELDS OF INTEREST

Behavioral/Experimental and Labor Economics

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### JOB MARKET PAPER

“Belief polarization about racial discrimination in hiring: Evidence from an information experiment”, September 2023

Political polarization is growing in the US, as Democrats and Republicans increasingly disagree not just on ideologies, but even on facts. Given the economic consequences of polarization, it is important to understand whether and how information can affect belief divergence. Using an online sample of 1100 Democrats and 1100 Republicans, I conduct an information experiment to examine the belief gap between Democrats and Republicans about the extent of hiring discrimination against Black workers in the US. I find that providing labor market information, namely wage gap information, fails to close the belief gap. While Democrats use this information to update their beliefs about racial discrimination in hiring, Republicans do not find it relevant. Consistent with the literature, I find that providing direct evidence on racial discrimination in hiring closes the belief gap. This information, however, widens the disagreement between Democrats and Republicans about whether hiring discrimination is a problem, likely due to motivated reasoning. Together, the findings highlight the role that divergent interpretations of information can have in the persistence of belief polarization.

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### PUBLICATIONS

“Robustness of Rank Independence in Risky Choice.” with B. Douglas Bernheim and Charles Sprenger, *AEA Papers & Proceedings*, 2022

Bernheim and Sprenger (2020) devise and implement a novel test of rank-dependent probability weighting both in general and as formulated in cumulative prospect theory. They reject both hypotheses decisively. Cumulative prospect theory cannot simultaneously account for the rank independence of

"equalizing reductions" for three-outcome lotteries, which it construes as indicating linear probability weighting, and the relationship between equalizing reductions and probabilities, which it interprets as indicating highly nonlinear probability weighting. In the current paper, we explore the robustness of the first finding, rank independence of equalizing reductions (and hence of decision weights), with respect to alternative experimental procedures

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## **WORKING PAPERS**

“The Long-Term Impact of Early Childhood Investment on Reducing Covid-19 Learning Loss” with Shruti Jha, John A. List, and Anya Samek, September 2023

We leverage a randomized evaluation of an early childhood program to study the impact of early life investments on resilience to negative shocks. When the children in our study were 3-5 years old, they were randomized to a preschool program, a parenting program or to a control group. Ten years later, the children were exposed to school shut-downs during the Covid-19 pandemic. With nearly 900 observations, we show that the parenting program had a protective causal impact on the decrease in academic test scores during the year that schools were closed. While the control group saw a 0.31 SD decline in standardized test scores after Covid-19, the parenting group saw only a 0.12 SD decline. We provide a conceptual framework and evidence on potential mechanisms driving this effect.

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## **RESEARCH IN PROGRESS**

“Gender Differences in Response to Feedback: Evidence from Performance Labels on Standardized Exams” (with Frances Lu)

“Tests of Discrimination Aversion” (with James Andreoni)

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## **FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, HONORS, AND AWARDS**

Russell Sage Foundation Dissertation Grant (\$10,000), 2023

UCSD Economics Diversity Research Fellowship (\$5,000), 2022

NSF Dissertation Improvement Grant #SES-2117463 (\$25,000) (PI: Andreoni, Co-PI: Royer), 2021

UCSD Clive Granger Research Fellowship, 2021

NSF Graduate Research Fellow, 2018-2023

UCSD Graduate Summer Research Fellowship, 2019 & 2020

UCSD Regents Fellowship, 2019

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## **RELEVANT POSITIONS HELD**

UCSD EconLab Manager, James Andreoni, Summer 2020-Spring 2022

Head Research Assistant, Daniel Benjamin and Miles Kimball, 2016-2018

Research Assistant, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Economics Department, 2014-2016

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## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

Teaching Assistant for MGT 160 Experiments in Firms (undergraduate), Prof. Sally Sadoff, Fall 2023

Teaching Assistant for MGT 410 Strategy (MBA), Prof. Anya Samek, Summer 2022

Teaching Assistant for ECON 143 Experimental Economics (undergraduate), Prof. James Andreoni, Winter 2021

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## **PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**

### *Presentations*

2023: Advances with Field Experiments (AFE), Economic Science Association North American Regional Meeting (ESA)

2021: Economic Science Association North American Regional Meeting

*Conference Participation*

2023: Behavioral Economics Annual Meeting (BEAM), Advances with Field Experiments (AFE),  
Economic Science Association North American Regional Meeting (ESA)

2022: Behavioral Economics Annual Meeting (BEAM); Russell Sage Foundation Summer Institute in  
Behavioral Economics; UCSD Rady Spring School in Behavioral Economics

2021: Behavioral Economics Annual Meeting (BEAM)

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**OTHER INFORMATION**

Citizenship: United States, United Kingdom

Languages: English (Native), Spanish (Proficient)

Skills: Stata, oTree, Python, HTML