

Carlo Medici

CONTACT INFORMATION

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EMPLOYMENT

Brown University, Postdoctoral Research Associate 2024–
Population Studies and Training Center (PSTC)
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Assistant Professor *Starting July 2025*
Department of Public Policy, Luskin School of Public Affairs

EDUCATION

Northwestern University, PhD, Managerial Economics and Strategy 2018–24
Northwestern University, MSc, Managerial Economics and Strategy 2018–19
Bocconi University, MSc, Economic and Social Sciences (summa cum laude) 2014–16
Bocconi University, BSc, Economic and Social Sciences (summa cum laude) 2011–14

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Labor Economics, Political Economy, Economic History

WORKING PAPERS

“Closing Ranks: Organized Labor and Immigration” [\[PDF\]](#)

This paper shows that immigration fostered the emergence of organized labor in the United States. I digitize archival records to assemble the first county-level dataset on historical U.S. union membership and use a shift-share instrument to isolate a plausibly exogenous labor supply shock induced by immigration, between 1900 and 1920. Counties with higher immigration experienced increases in union presence, the number of union branches, the share of unionized workers, and the number of union members per branch. These effects were more pronounced among skilled workers, particularly in counties more exposed to labor competition from immigrants, and in areas with more negative attitudes toward immigrants. The evidence is consistent with existing workers unionizing in response to immigration, driven by both economic and social motivations. These findings highlight a novel driver of unionization in the early 20th-century United States and reveal an unexplored consequence of immigration: the development of institutions aimed at protecting workers’ status in the labor market, with effects that persist to the present.

“The Impact of the Chinese Exclusion Act on the Economic Development of the Western U.S.”
with Joe Long, Nancy Qian, and Marco Tabellini [\[PDF\]](#)

This paper investigates the economic consequences of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which banned immigration from China. The Act reduced the number of Chinese workers of all skill levels living in the United States. It also reduced the labor supply and the quality of jobs held by white and U.S.-born workers, the intended beneficiaries of the Act, and reduced manufacturing output. The results suggest that the Chinese Exclusion Act slowed economic growth in western states until at least 1940.

“Political Connections, Careers, and Performance in the Civil Service: Evidence from U.S. Federal Judges” with Massimo Pulejo

This paper studies the role of political connections on the performance and career trajectories of civil servants. The focus is on U.S. federal judges, who are nominated by the president

based on recommendations from their home-state senators. Leveraging individual-level data on judges and senators from 1789 to 2019, we employ difference-in-differences and event-study designs to compare judges' performance before and after their recommending senators leave office. Following their recommenders' exit from Congress, judges' performance decline. These negatives effects manifest in both quantity, as measured by fewer judicial opinions authored, and quality, indicated by shorter opinions and fewer citations made and received. The results are consistent with an erosion of career prospects driving these effects: after their recommenders leave office, district court judges become less likely to be promoted to upper-level courts. The findings highlight how political appointments can incentivize civil servants through career concerns but also show that these incentives are closely tied to the tenure of their political patrons.

SELECTED WORK IN PROGRESS **"Political Cycles in Black Union Membership"**

This paper studies how political incentives affect the behavior of public sector labor unions, organizations with well-acknowledged ties to politics and the Democratic party in particular. I analyze individual-level data on U.S. public sector employees between 1984 and 2020 from the Current Population Survey and exploit the timing of elections at different levels of government – presidential, gubernatorial, and local – to investigate the role of political cycles in public sector unionization. The results show that in presidential election years, union membership rates of Black workers increase by approximately 3%. The effect is larger during open seat elections, in Blue states, and among constituencies where other institutions that traditionally mobilize Black voters, such as the NAACP or the Black church, have a more limited presence. The evidence is consistent with labor unions increasing their membership ahead of a general election by targeting low-propensity and likely Democratic-leaning voters.

"The Economic Effects of Public Hiring Constraints" with Maria Carreri, Edoardo Di Porto, Edoardo Teso, and Silvia Vannutelli

How do public administrations cope with tight limits on external hiring? What is the effect of these limits on public sector performance? How does the size of public employment affect local labor markets and private sector growth? In this paper, we aim to address these questions by: (i) leveraging rich administrative data on the universe of both public and private sector employees in the Italian labor market, and (ii) exploiting plausibly exogenous variation in hiring constraints across different Italian public administrations induced by a 2008 reform that limited public sector hiring. With the findings of this paper, we aim to contribute to a long-standing debate on the public employment effects on the labor market, by exploiting exogenous variation in the size of local public employment, and to the literature on internal labor markets, by focusing on a unique setting that allows us to document how the internal labor market of public sector organizations responds to shocks in external hiring ability.

PRESENTATIONS

2025 (*incl. scheduled*): UCLA Public Policy, ASREC Conference (George Mason University), CNEH Conference (Montreal)

2024: ASSA Annual Meeting (San Antonio), University of Nottingham, CREI, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, USC Marshall, "Institutions, Organizations & Growth" (IOG) Spring Conference (UChicago BFI), "Fighting for Freedom Symposium" (GSU and UMD, online), Tilburg University (online), NICEP Conference (University of Nottingham), "Junior Economists" Meeting (University of Milan), NBER Summer Institute "Development of the American Economy", EHA Annual Meeting (Sacramento), Northwestern-UBC Political Economy of

Development Conference, CEMIR Junior Economist Workshop on Migration Research (ifo Institute), UW-Milwaukee, Brown University, AFD-World Bank “Migration and Development Conference” (Bologna), Online Economic History Workshop, “Crime Before Christmas” Workshop (Bocconi University), Dondena Workshop in Public Policy (Bocconi University)
2023: EHA Annual Meeting (Pittsburgh) [poster session], Northwestern University

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS & AWARDS	Nevins Dissertation Prize (Finalist), Economic History Association	2024
	Global Impacts Graduate Fellowship, Northwestern Buffett Institute for Global Affairs	2023–24
	PhD Research Grant, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University	2023
	Doctoral Fellowship, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University	2018–23
	IGIER Visiting Student Initiative, Bocconi University	2014–16
REFeree SERVICE	American Economic Review, Quarterly Journal of Economics, American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, Explorations in Economic History, Journal of Labor Economics, Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization	
TEACHING EXPERIENCE	Northwestern, Statistical Decision Analysis (EMBA), Teaching Assistant	2020–23
	Northwestern, Making Business Decisions with Big Data (MBA), Teaching Assistant	2020–21
	Northwestern, Business Analytics I (MBA), Teaching Assistant	2019–21
RELEVANT PAST POSITIONS	Research Assistant, Prof. Nancy Qian, Northwestern University	2020–22
	Research Assistant, Prof. Edoardo Teso, Northwestern University	2020
	Research Assistant, Prof. Guido Tabellini, Bocconi University	2017–18
	Trainee, Research Department, European Central Bank (Frankfurt, Germany)	2016–17
	Research Assistant, Prof. Tommaso Nannicini, Bocconi University	2015–16
	Summer Analyst, Fitch Ratings (London, UK)	2015
LANGUAGES	English (fluent), Italian (native), French (intermediate), Spanish (basic)	
REFERENCES	Nancy Qian	Joel Mokyr
	James J. O’Connor Professor	Robert H. Strotz Professor
	Northwestern University	Northwestern University
	Kellogg School of Management	Department of Economics
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	Matthew Notowidigdo	Edoardo Teso
	David McDaniel Keller Professor	Associate Professor
	University of Chicago	Northwestern University
	Booth School of Business	Kellogg School of Management
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	Marco Tabellini	
	Assistant Professor	
	Harvard University	
	Harvard Business School	
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