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Department of Economics
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DEGREES	2018–2024 (<i>expected</i>) Ph.D. in Economics, Texas A&M University 2016–2018 M.A. in Economics, American University of Beirut 2013–2016 B.A. in Economics, American University of Beirut
RESEARCH FIELDS	Applied Microeconomics, Labor Economics, Law and Economics, Health Economics, Economics of Education
PUBLICATIONS	1. Mikdash, Maya, and Reem Zaiour (2022). “Does (all) Police Violence Cause De-policing? Evidence from George Floyd and Police Shootings in Minneapolis”, <i>AEA Papers and Proceedings</i>
WORKING PAPERS	1. Mikdash, Maya, and Suhyeon Oh. “The Role of Race in the Legal Representation of Low-Income Defendants.” [Job Market Paper] Abstract: Racial disparities have been well-documented at every stage of the criminal justice system, as have the roles of police, prosecutors, judges, and juries in driving those disparities. In contrast, little is known about the role of race in the defense of low-income defendants by court-appointed attorneys. This is important since 80 percent of criminal defendants rely on assigned counsel for legal defense. Exploiting the quasi-random assignment of court-appointed attorneys to cases in Travis County, Texas, we test whether defense attorneys secure better deals for same-race defendants using a difference-in-differences approach. Results indicate that while Black and White attorneys are similarly effective at securing dismissals for White defendants, Black attorneys are less effective than White attorneys at securing dismissals for Black defendants. Specifically, Black defendants who are represented by White rather than Black attorneys are 20-22 percent more likely to have their charges dismissed. Moreover, estimates of attorney individual effects suggest that results are driven by the entire sample of White attorneys rather than just a handful of them. 2. Mikdash, Maya, and Reem Zaiour. “The Impact of Police Shootings on Gun Violence and Civilian Cooperation.” [R&R at Journal of Public Economics] Abstract: This paper studies the effect of exposure to police involved shootings on gun violence and crime reporting as a measure of civilian cooperation. To distinguish between crime reporting and crime incidence, we use administrative data on 911 calls and ShotSpotter data from Minneapolis. By exploiting the variation in the timing and the distance to these incidents, we show that exposure to a police shooting increases gun-related crimes by 5-7 percent and decreases shots reported by 1-2 percent. Taken together, this implies a 6 to 9 percent decrease in the reporting rate following a police shooting. 3. Mikdash, Maya, and Suhyeon Oh. “Shades of Justice: The Disparate Impact of Court-Appointed Attorney Quality.” Abstract: In this paper, we study the disparate impact of court-appointed attorney quality on Black defendants. Using the quasi-random assignment of court-appointed attorneys to cases in a large Texas county, we show that Black defendants are disproportionately harmed by low-quality attorneys. We show this in two ways. First, while a one standard deviation increase in attorney quality—measured as the ability to get a case dismissed—increases the likelihood of case dismissal by four percent for Black defendants, it has no effect on White defendants. Second, relative to dismissal rates achieved by the best attorneys in our sample, Black defendants with lesser-quality attorneys

are 15% less likely than White defendants to have their cases dismissed. Additional results indicate that lower-quality attorneys exert less effort when representing Black relative to White defendants, consistent with racial bias driving some or all of the disparate impact.

4. Mikdash, Maya. "The Impact of Internal Oversight on Arrest and Use of Force."
Abstract: While there is much desire for holding police accountable for misconduct, there is little evidence on whether the most common accountability system, internal affairs, impacts police behavior in intended or unintended ways. Using data from a large city where there is conditionally random assignment of officers to 911 calls, I employ regression discontinuity and difference-in-differences methods to distinguish the impact of investigations from confounding factors. Results indicate that increased oversight from internal investigations does not change an officer's likelihood of making an arrest or using force. This is true across different types of allegations, including those that are sustained. Surprisingly, even imposing sanctions after a sustained allegation does not change police behavior, irrespective of the severity of the sanction. This has important policy implications, as it suggests that the current system of internal oversight has no impact on police behavior.
5. Berkouwer, Susanna B., Pierre Biscaye, Maya Mikdash, Steve Puller, and Catherine D. Wolfram. "Voltage Quality and Economic Activity." [Draft available upon request]
Abstract: We study voltage quality issues experienced by electricity customers in urban Ghana. We begin by describing the associated economic costs, and then estimate the causal impact of a modest improvement in voltage quality as a result of quasi-random electricity grid investments. To do so, we combine minute-by-minute customer-level reliability and quality measurements with detailed panel surveys of more than 1,500 households and small businesses across Ghana. The analyses document three key patterns. First, we document widespread voltage problems: approximately 20% of grid electricity is of poor quality. Second, customers report \$50 in direct annual economic costs, including investments in protective equipment. Third, using a differences-in-differences design, we find that a 5V difference in average voltage—resulting from the construction of additional transformers at arbitrarily selected sites—reduces the frequency and cost of appliance damages at treatment sites relative to control sites, but generates no other economic impacts.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

1. Adger, Chandon, Mark Hoekstra, and Maya Mikdash. "Race and Police Use of Force." [Writing stage]
Abstract: The murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer sparked widespread protests and calls to reform policing to address the perception that police use force in a racially discriminatory way. In this paper, we report results from two different empirical tests capturing relative and absolute bias, both of which indicate that race was not a systemic factor in police use of force in Minneapolis. Using data on 1.5 million calls for service from 2009 to 2019, we show that White and Black officers scale up force similarly as they go from White to Black neighborhoods. The resulting null estimates are sufficiently precise to rule out effects of the magnitude found in two other cities. In the second approach, we show that while Black civilians in Minneapolis experience police use of force at nearly 7 times the rate of White civilians, this disparity is entirely explained by the increased number and severity of civilian-initiated calls in Black neighborhoods. Finally, we note that the officer who killed George Floyd used force at a rate that was substantially below department average. Collectively, these findings indicate that while race may have been a factor in isolated incidents, on average it was not a factor in police use of force in Minneapolis.
2. Mikdash, Maya, and Jiee Zhong. "The Long-Run Effects of Access to Free Pre-K."
 [Proposal approved; awaiting data access]
3. Mikdash, Maya, George Naufal, and Bethany Patterson. "The Effect of Attorney Payment on Indigent Case Outcomes: Evidence from Texas."
 [Awaiting data access]
4. Mikdash, Maya. "The Long-Run Effects of Lead Exposure: Evidence from Census Data."
 [Proposal writing stage]

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE	June 2020–Present Research Assistant to Professor Steve Puller, Texas A&M University	
TEACHING EXPERIENCE	Summer 2022 Primary Instructor , ECON 489: SPTP: Economics of Crime, Texas A&M University Spring 2020 TA, ECMT 676: Econometrics II (PhD level), Texas A&M University Fall 2019 TA, ECMT 463: Introduction to Econometrics, Texas A&M University Fall 2017 TA, ECON 212: Principles of Macroeconomics, American University of Beirut	
SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS (*SCHEDULED)	London School of Economics (LSE) Crime and Policing Workshop	
CONFERENCES (*SCHEDULED)	2023 SEA Southern Economic Association* APEE The Association of Private Enterprise Education AEA American Economic Association Conference (poster) 2022 AEA American Economic Association Conference APPAM Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management SEA Southern Economic Association 2021 SEA Southern Economic Association APPAM Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management (canceled)	
GRANTS & AWARDS	2023 Private Enterprise Research Center's M.J. Grove Scholarship, Texas A&M University 2022 Private Enterprise Research Center's M.J. Grove Scholarship, Texas A&M University 2022 Publication Accelerator Grant, Institute of Humane Studies (\$5,000) 2022 Gail Frey Monson Memorial Scholarship, Texas A&M University 2022 Charles S. Maurice Fellowship, Texas A&M University 2018 President Elias Hraoui Award in Economics, American University of Beirut	
SERVICE & OTHER ACTIVITIES	2022-2023 Student representative, Economics Graduate Student Association, Texas A&M University 2022-2023 Co-organizer, Public-Labor-IO (PLIO) brownbag, Texas A&M University	
REFEREEING	<i>Journal of Urban Affairs; Police Quarterly</i>	
SOFTWARE	STATA, ArcGIS, \LaTeX	
LANGUAGES	Arabic (native), English (fluent)	
REFERENCES	Professor Mark Hoekstra Department of Economics Baylor University Mark_Hoekstra@baylor.edu	Professor Steve Puller Department of Economics Texas A&M University spuller@tamu.edu
	Professor Jonathan Meer Department of Economics Texas A&M University jmeer@tamu.edu	Professor Laura Dague Bush School of Government and Public Service Texas A&M University dague@tamu.edu