

# SIDAK G. YNTISO

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## EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Politics, New York University (Expected 2022)  
Committee: Sanford Gordon (chair), Anna Harvey, David Stasavage  
Additional training: Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models (2019)

M.A. in Politics, New York University (2018)

B.A. in Economics, New York University Abu Dhabi (2014)

## DISSERTATION: “ESSAYS ON THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS”

*Abstract:* Local prosecutors and trial judges are subject to reelection in nearly all U.S. states. This four-essay dissertation examines how electoral, policy-related, and racial considerations influence their behavior. First, I assess whether the political preferences of prosecutors shape racial charging disparities in state courts. Charging records from three states demonstrate that narrowly elected Republican prosecutors seek longer sentences than Democrats, but only on cases involving Black defendants. Next, this dissertation traces how geographic variation in reelection motives affects criminal prosecutions. I find that Black defendants tend to reside in, and the influence of partisanship on charging is most substantial in, precincts where Republican prosecutors perform poorly. Third, I develop a simple adverse selection model to illustrate how policy preferences and electoral concerns shape charging decisions and, in doing so, how potential reforms might alter disparities. Finally, I (along with Sanford Gordon) examine how changes in the perceived threat of recall affect judicial behavior. We find a significant, instantaneous increase in sentencing severity by Californian judges following a highly publicized recall campaign against one judge.

## PUBLICATIONS

- [1] “Incentive Effects of Recall Elections: Evidence from California Superior Court Judges,” with Sanford Gordon. Forthcoming, *Journal of Politics*. [\[Preprint\]](#)
- [2] “Judicial Accountability and Racial Disparity in Criminal Appeals,” with Anna Harvey. Forthcoming, *Journal of Legal Studies*. [\[Preprint\]](#)
- [3] “Minority Representation and Democratization by Force: Evidence from Black Enfranchisement during Reconstruction,” with Mario Chacón and Jeffrey Jensen. Forthcoming, *Journal of Historical Political Economy*. [\[Preprint\]](#)
- [4] “Democratic Reversals and the Size of Government,” with Jeffrey Jensen. *European Journal of Political Economy* 58 (2019): 21-49. [\[Paper\]](#)

## CONDITIONALLY ACCEPTED

- [1] “Bridging the Grade Gap: Reducing Assessment Bias in a Multi-Grader Class,” with Sean Kates, Tine Paulsen and Joshua Tucker. *Political Analysis*. [\[Preprint\]](#)

## WORKING PAPERS

- [1] “Does Prosecutor Partisanship Exacerbate the Racial Charging Gap? Evidence from District Attorneys in Three States.”
- [2] “Targeting Punishment: Political Geography and Criminal Sentencing in Texas.”
- [3] “An Electoral Model of Charge Bargaining in Criminal Prosecutions.”
- [4] “Detecting Partisan and Racial Gerrymandering,” with Sanford Gordon.

## TEACHING

*New York University (2018-21)*

- Power and Politics in America (Spring 2021)
- Thinking, Learning, and Consciousness in Humans and Machines (Fall 2020)
- Causal Inference (Spring 2020) at NYU’s Center for Data Science
- Senior Honors (Fall 2019)
- Data Assistant for Politics Department (Spring 2019)
- Comparative Politics (Fall 2018)

*New York University Abu Dhabi (2014-15)*

- Economic Development (Winter 2015, Spring 2015)
- Principles of Microeconomics (Summer 2015, Spring 2015, Fall 2014)

## AWARDS & GRANTS

- Dean’s Dissertation Grant (2021-22)
- Prestage-Cook Travel Award (2020)
- George Downs Grant (2018)
- Dean’s Student Travel Grant (2017, 2018)
- NYU Henry H. MacCracken Fellowship (2016-21)
- NYU Abu Dhabi Global Academic Fellowship (2014 -15)

## INVITED TALKS & PRESENTATIONS

*2021:* Southern Political Science Association (SPSA); UT Public Law Conference; Slavery and Its Legacies Symposium, USC Bedrosian Center.

*2020:* SPSA; Conference on Institutions and Law Making, Emory; Western Political Science Association (WPSA); Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA).

*2019:* American Political Science Association (APSA); MPSA; NYU Race, Crime, and Policing Workshop; Princeton Political Economy and Public Law; 14th Annual Conference on Empirical

Legal Studies.

2018: APSA; MPSA; International Studies Association (ISA).

2017: APSA; Politics and History Network Annual Conference; MPSA; ISA; European Political Science Association.

## **PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

*Internal:* Facilitator for Working Group on the Political Economy of Institutions (with Sanford Gordon, 2019-2020); Co-organizer of Contemporary African Political Economy Research Seminar (2019); Co-organizer of Graduate Political Economy Seminar (2018-2019).

*Reviewer:* *Economics and Politics*, *European Journal of Political Economy*, *Journal of Law and Courts*, *Journal of Politics*.

## **LANGUAGES & SKILLS**

*Computing:* ArcGIS, Python, R, RStan, Stata.

*Languages:* English, Amharic.