Can Al Improve Asylum Decision-Making?	
Daniel L. Chen	

# Judicial Analytics for Recognition and Dignity

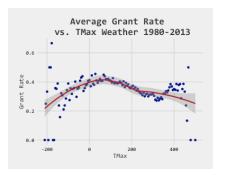
 Cognitive science and psychology suggests that humans have limited and imperfect reasoning capacities (Tversky and Kahneman 1986; Eyster 2019)



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#### The weather

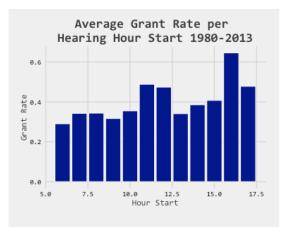
Judges deny refugees asylum when the weather is too hot or too cold



ICAIL 2017

#### Time of Day

They grant asylum more before lunch and less after.

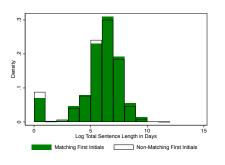


1M decisions

See also Norris 2020, Danziger, Levav, Avnaim-Pesso, PNAS 2011

#### The defendant's name

They assign longer sentence lengths to defendants whose first initial matches their own.



Not-Matching First Initials

Matching First Initials

Non-Matching First Initials

First Letter of First Name

First Letter of Last Name

See also Belenzon, Chatterji, and Daley, AER 2017, Jena, Sunstein, and Hicks 2018

# The defendant's birthday

When they do the opposite and give the gift of leniency

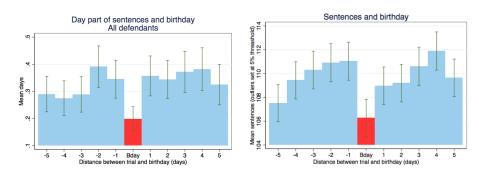
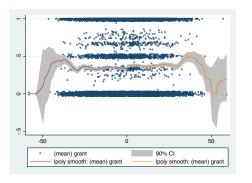


Figure: US and French judicial leniency on defendant birthdays

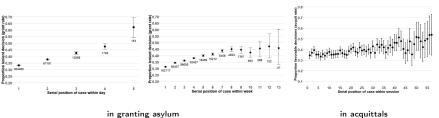
#### NFL Football

Judges are more lenient the day after their team wins, rather than loses.



#### Sequences

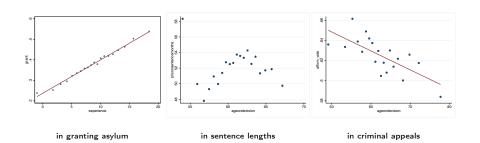
#### Judicial leniency grows for later cases.



in granting asylum

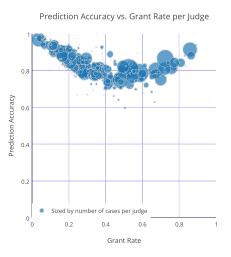
See also Antipov & Pokryshevskaya, 2017; Bian et al., 2019; Colton & Peterson, 1967; Scheer, 1973; Wilson, 1977

# Leniency grows with a judge's age



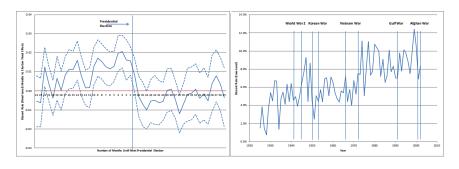
# Snap judgments

We can use machine learning to predict asylum decisions with 80% accuracy the date the case opens.. and when it closes.



ICAIL 2017

#### Elections and wartime also affect decisions



JLE 2017

# Gambler's Fallacy

How people often imagine a sequence of coin flips:

0101001011001010100110100

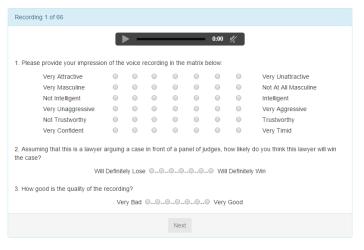
A real sequence of coin flips:

01010111111011000001001101

# Up to 5% of decisions reversed due to the gambler's fallacy

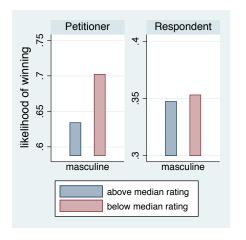


# In the US Supreme Court, the first sentence of the lawyers oral arguments are identical



"Mr. Chief Justice, (and) may it please the Court?"

# Male petitioners below median in masculinity rating are 7 percentage points more likely to win



Plos-ONF 2016

#### Besides voice, there is text



- Females: Migraine, hysterical, morbid, obese, terrified, unemancipated, battered
- Males: Reserve, industrial, honorable, commanding, conscientious, duty

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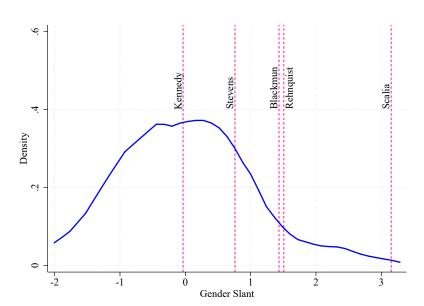
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# We can do this judge by judge

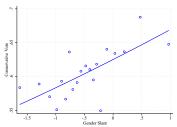
Justice Scalia is an outlier in gender slant

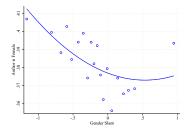


#### In the Circuit Courts, judges with more gender slant...

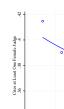
Vote against women's rights issues

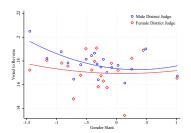
Assign fewer opinions for females to author

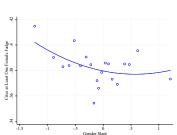




Reverse male judges less often







Cite female judges less often

# By 1990, 40% of federal judges had attended an economics-training program.



weeks, 19 Federal judges from cases now pending in Federal cou around the country took a grueling, six- "One has to be very cautious in deal"

ended here vesterday. sometimes ending at 10 P.M. or later, in economic theory and enable them the judges received the equivalent of a better understand the testimony of exp

full semester at the college level. Their teachers were, among others, two | Chief Judge David N. Edelstein of Nobel laureates in economics, Paul Sam- Federal District Court in the South uelson and Milton Friedman. The courses, District of New York, who is the sponsored by the Law and Economics Center of the University of Miami School of Law, made up what is believed to Corporation antitrust case-regarded have been the first such institute for many lawyers as the most important a

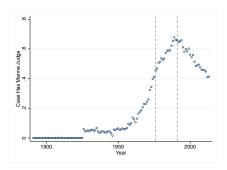
Federal judges. said Chief Judge John W. Reynolds of attend the institute to clear any f the Federal District Court in the Eastern questions about a possible conflict of District of Wisconsin, "We were here not terest. to become economists, but to understand the language of economics. Courts are replied that they saw no grounds for only as good as judges and the lawyers conflict of interest in my coming he who appear before us. By and large, our Judge Edelstein said. training in economics is not really satis- From the beginning, the judges. factory, and yet we are being increasingly of them 60 years old or over, beh called upon to decide economic issues." like students, deferring to their tead

day-a-week course in economics that with Federal judges," said Henry Man director of the center. "Our goal has be With classes starting at 9 A.M. and to give them the most recent think

witnesses and lawvers." in the International Business Machi trust litigation of the century-inform "It was a very enriching experience," attorneys in the case of his intention

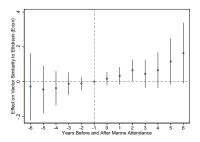
"All the lawyers were very cordial

The program dealt basically with eco- and reminiscing about undergrade nomic theory, and an effort was made days decades ago.



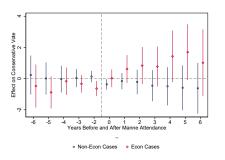
#### The results of these seminars were dramatic

We can see economics language used in academic articles became prevalent in opinions.

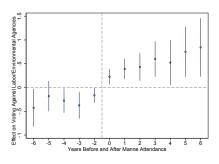


#### The results of these seminars were dramatic

We can see economics trained judges changing how they decided



Econ vs Non-Economics Cases

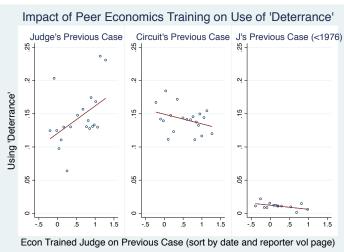


on Labor/Environmental Cases

See also Hjort, Moreira, Rao, and Santini, AER R&R

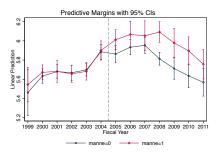
#### Impacting their peers

We can see economic language traveling from one judge to another and across legal areas.



### When judges were given discretion in sentencing

economics trained judges immediately rendered 20% longer sentences relative to the non-economics counterparts.



#### Judicial Analytics and Law J of Artificial Intelligence & Law 2018

Justice: equal treatment before the law  $(y = f(X) + \varepsilon, a \rightarrow X)$  equality based on recognition of difference  $(y \perp W, var(\varepsilon) \perp W, a \nrightarrow W)$ 

control principle and merit principle: individuals responsible only for events that are under their control W: race, gender, masculinity, name, football, weather, judge's lunchtime, preceding case, ...

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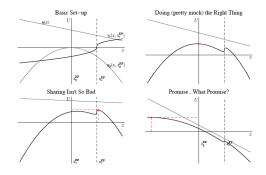
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#### Machine Learning and Rule of Law Computational Analysis of Law 2018

- Behavioral anomalies offer intuitive understanding of feature relevance
- "settings where people are closer to indifference among options are more likely to lead to detectable effects [of behavioral biases] outside of it." (Simonsohn, JPSP 2011)



A model of recognition-respect and revealed preference indifference

- Early predictability
- Behavioral anomalies
- If systematic indifference, judge identity might predict appea
- Inattentiveness to appellate reversals
- Implicit risk rankings of litigants closer to random
- O Difference-in-indifference for certain groups?

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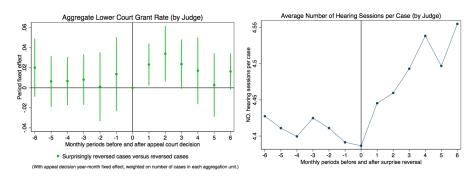
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# Using ML to Diagnose Judicial Inattention

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- Difference-in-indifference for certain groups?

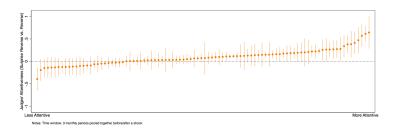
# After "Surprise" Reversals, Judges Grant More Asylum and Hold More Hearing Sessions



Surprise Reversal is a reversal of a decision that was predicted to be "Affirm"

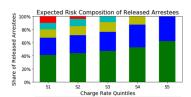
See also Posner, HUP 2010

# Judges Vary in Responsiveness to Reversal

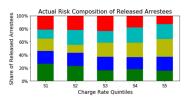


Do less attentive judges have implicit risk rankings closer to random?



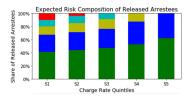


 If defendants released based only on risk score, the harshest prosecutors would only be releasing low-risk defendants.

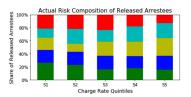


- Distribution of risk scores for released defendants is similar for most lenient and least lenient prosecutors.
- Are the lenient asylum judges, only denying the 'riskiest' applicants
  - ▶ i.e., seeing the lowest reversal rates (of their asylum denials)?



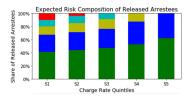


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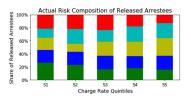


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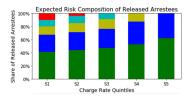


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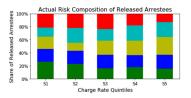


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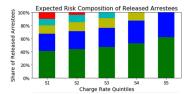


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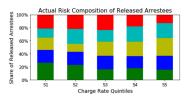


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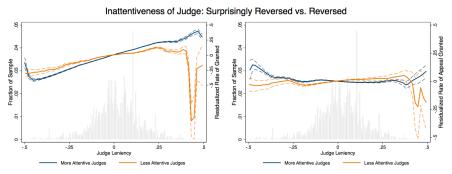
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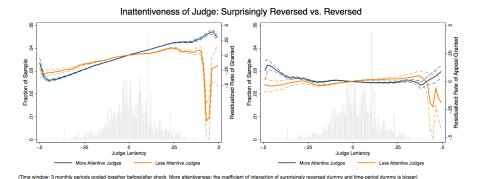
### Left Figure: Judges have strong habits

A judge who is generally lenient in other cases is likely to be lenient in a given case



(Time window: 3 monthly periods pooled together before/after shock. More attentiveness: the coefficient of interaction of surprisingly reversed dummy and time-period dummy is bigger)

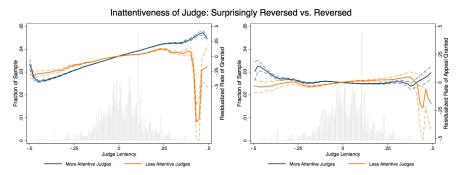
# Right Figure: Assess implicit risk ranking



If judges are 'ordering' their asylees, the most lenient judge letting in the most applicants should be rejecting only the "least safe" applicants

Their appeal success should be lower, which we see among more attentive judges

#### .. but not less attentive judges

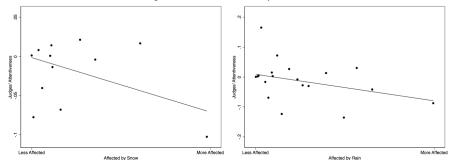


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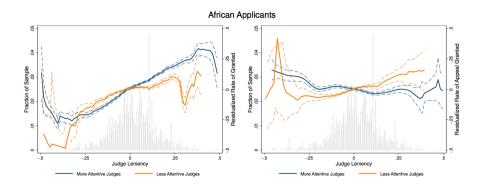
.. who may be more prone to other extraneous factors

#### .. such as rain and snow

#### Judges' Attentiveness and Vulnerability to Weather



# Difference in Indifference for asylees from the Global South



- Cognitive science and psychology suggests that humans have limited and imperfect reasoning capacities (Tversky and Kahneman 1986; Eyster 2019)
- Gambler's fallacy, mood, time of day, order, ...
  - highlight fragility of courts
    - ★ "In a crowded immigration court, 7 minutes to decide a family's future" (Wash Post 2/2/14)
- Policy discussion tends to revolve around having AI replace humans or suggest the optimal decision
- Consider instead an incremental approach that shows decision-makers their predicted self and then uses predictions of error to nudge

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- In Stage 1, people use Al as a support tool, speeding up existing processes (for example, by prefilling forms)
  - ▶ An Al-based recommender system offers a decision-maker the best prediction of themselves, based on their previous decision-making, from a model using only legally relevant features X.
    - ★ assess judges vs. their predicted self
  - ▶ (1) Increase consistency across similar cases by offering the relevant reference points and cabining the influence of extraneous factors.
  - ▶ (2) Deviating from defaults facilitates conscious deliberation.
  - ▶ (3) Seeing the predicted self leverages self-image motives of pro-social decision-makers (Benabou and Tirole QJE 2011).
- self-image (predicted self)

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### Stage 2: Prediction of Error

- A deviation that is more likely to render an error (from a model using all available features X and W) can be accompanied by a nudge to "be more attentive" or spend more time to make a better decision.
  - ▶ (1) A nudge, instead of a checklist, might impose less bandwidth.
  - ▶ (2) Save time and energy to focus on novel, complex cases.
- self-improvement (nudges)

# Stage 3: Explanations

- A decision-maker may want interpretable machine learning and request a reason for why the deviation may lead to mistakes.
  - ▶ (1) Stage 3 elevates the AI to the role of a more general coach, providing feedback on choices.
  - ▶ (2) The more people feel that their autonomy is protected and that they are in control of the conversation—able to choose when feedback is given—the better they respond to it. (West and Thorson 2018)
- self-understanding (why)

# Stage 4: Dialogue

- Of course, it is always possible that the AI system's suggestion would not take into account some reliable private information that the decision-maker might have access to.
  - Where this happens, the AI system would be steering the decision-maker off course rather than correcting for their inconsistencies.
  - ► Therefore, a dialogue, encouraged between the decision-maker and the Al system, allowing for the Al to learn from the user as well.
- self-expression (autonomy)

# Stage 5: Community of Experts

- Al brings in other people's decision histories and patterns, serving as a platform for a community of experts.
  - ▶ A decision-maker may want to access a community of experts by seeing what the algorithm predicts other to do.
  - This can be accessible as a dropdown menu, to seek advice from a particular decision-maker,
    - or as a statistical distribution to protect privacy.
- community of practice (self vs. others)

- Stage 6, experts advised it helps train novices
  - who tend to make more mistakes
  - experts can input a preferred decision
  - or use prediction if appealed
- Stage 7, WebMD for litigants, increasing access to justice
  - ▶ and transparency & accountability
- Stage 8, knowledge of one's impact
- Stage 9, use feedback from dialogue stage as recommender system
  - with A|B testing to generate personalized causal inference

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  - Assess judges vs. their predicted self
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# Proof of Concept

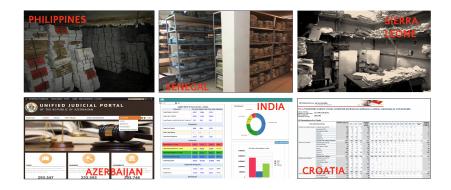


• Can incremental Al work?

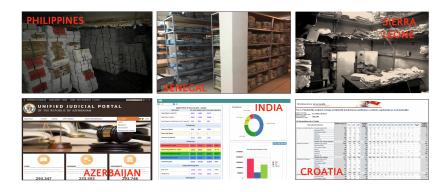
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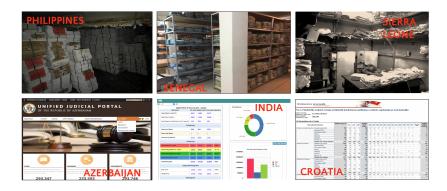
• Can incremental AI work?



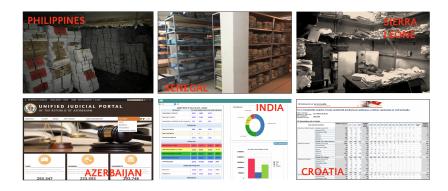
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  - Increasingly digitized large-scale datasets
  - ML applications to produce interpretable data from unstructured text
  - Predictive models of decision-making to better understand biases and address them with digital interfaces



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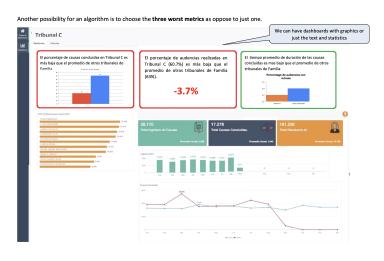
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## Personalized Interventions

This kind of data can be used to personalize interfaces for judges.



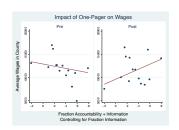
## Recommending Actions

### Algorithms identified the greatest sources of court delays

### Information and accountability



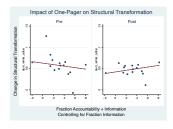
#### increased wages



### increased speed of justice



### and spurred structural transformation



## Self Reflection

### 10 months-long intervention



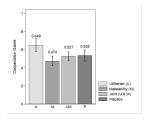
See also Eskreis-Winkler, et. al PNAS 2019

### reduced gender bias (measured in IATs)

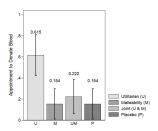


## Training Empathy

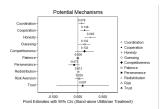
#### Increased altruism, cooperation



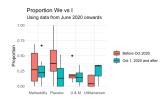
### blood donations, orphange visits



### coordination, honesty, theory of mind



### language of social cohesion in social media



## E-Justice Innovations

#### WhatsApp Access to Courts



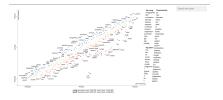
apps for missing cases



### uber-ization of case backlog



### open legal search engines



### Incremental Al

#### Open source no-code tools for

#### data entry and decision-support



### learning best practices



### understanding justice needs



### increasing recognition-respect





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