

My research bridges the classic divide between law and economics—the consequentialist view that optimal policy should be based on calculations of costs and benefits—and the non-consequentialist view that policy should be determined deontologically: from duties we derive what is the correct law—what is right and just. I work on topics in behavioral economics, political economy, and development. This work has generated over 8,000 citations in Google Scholar as of December 7, 2024.

One primary thread in law and behavioral economics is the measurement of normative commitments. I led the development of the leading technological platform, oTree, for conducting strategic interaction and survey experiments in the lab, online, and in the field (JBEF 2016) and stated attitudes (AI Magazine 2023, NeurIPS 2021). We provide a formal interpretation of deontological motivations and a revealed preference method to distinguish the presence of deontological motives from purely consequentialist ones (Science Advances 2022). We use this framework to identify problems with commonly used methods in experimental economics (JESA 2023a, 2023b), explain non-confrontational extremists in the judiciary (EER 2023), and identify preference falsification among civil servants (WP). We formalize when different survey methods, like Likert or Quadratic Voting for Survey Research, are superior (University of Chicago Law Review 2019), test these methods in a nationwide randomized control trial measuring polarization (PSRM 2024), and show how machine learning methods can select among survey methods (WP). We document the malleability of moral views to laws (JEBO 2014; JOEP R&R) and rule compliance without formal institutions (WP). We also document the behavioral response to legitimacy of acts taken by others (INFORMS 2016), legitimacy of rules (ACMCSCW 2011), and perceived demand for legitimacy of rules (WP). In a historical context, I find limited deterrent effects of the death penalty by the British military during World War I and show that executions spurred Irish desertions (JLEO R&R). In a more recent context, we investigate the long-term impacts of criminal justice severity on perceived legitimacy of the state (WP). Among prisoners, we collect social preference data to test leading theories of crime (WP). Among children, we field a nationwide platform for collecting social preferences of secondary students (PNAS 2021), show how these metrics can predict Covid-19 resilience (Nature Science of Learning 2024), and measure the spread of social preferences in networks (WP). Another stream of work characterizes the role of empathy and emotions in a formal model of recognition-respect: recognizing when our decisions violate others' reference points (REE 2018). We examine the strategic display of emotions (WP), how empathy affects fairness considerations (RLE 2018), and how agency makes decisions fairer (Advances in Economics of Religion 2019). Other work experimentally weakens the case for ambiguity aversion (JBEE 2024) and

assumptions underlying models for ambiguity aversion (JOEP R&R). Ongoing work leverages the behavioral motivations to propose fairer ways to incorporate AI in decision-making (HBR 2020), motivate judges to reduce behavioral anomalies (AJLE 2023), assess machine learning for judicial decision-making (WP), and mindfulness (WP).

A secondary thread in law and behavioral economics studies the cognitive economics of judicial decisions. I present a definition of justice using the rubric of machine learning (AIL 2019) and a framework where measuring behavioral anomalies documents revealed preference indifference (Law as Data 2019). We show that weather and time of day affects decisions (ICAIL 2017A), as does the defendant's name (Kyklos 2024), defendant's birthday (JEBO 2023), NFL football (JBEE R&R), snap judgments (ICAIL 2017B), elections and wartime (JLE 2017), priming (EER 2024)—increasingly over time (IER R|R), gambler's fallacy (QJE 2016), sequences (JAP 2022), racial contrast (WP), motivational reasoning (Plos-ONE R&R), perceived masculinity (Plos-ONE 2016, Law as Data 2019; JLEA R&R), voice mimicry (WP), loss aversion (WP), intermittent fasting (NHB 2023), shared biographical characteristics (NeurIPS 2016), shared ethnicity (JLEA R&R), and their own gender attitudes expressed in text, which also affects the gender of judges they cite, reverse, and assign authorship to (AEJ:A 2024, Minnesota J of Law and Inequality 2024). I show that judges less attentive to surprise reversals have implicit risk rankings of litigants closer to random and display difference-in-indifference to litigants from the Global South (WP). Difference-in-indifference helps explain prosecutor decisions in screening (NeurIPS 2017), the contribution of prosecutorial screening to racial disparities (WP), and the contribution of hierarchy and race to racial disparities (WP). Behavioral anomalies can be used to assess judicial nominees and predict their decisions on the Supreme Court (Cardozo Law Review 2018).

My work in law and behavioral economics documents the cognitive underpinnings of normative commitments. Building on this, in law and political economy, one primary thread measures the consequences of normative commitments. We develop methods for causal inference with high-dimensional instrumental variables, such as the characteristics of judges on randomly composed panels (ECMA 2012). We show that precedents forbidding sexual harassment increase female labor force participation (WP), government takings power increase growth and inequality (WP), progressive free speech standards liberalized sexual attitudes and behaviors and increased crime rates and sexually transmitted diseases (SSR R&R), and pro-abortion precedent reduced restrictive state regulations on abortion access and led to resistance and subsequent acceptance in abortion attitudes (SJE 2024). We discuss the problems of reverse causality when distinguishing norms and law (William & Mary Bill of Rights Journal 2013) and

validate the assumptions of our method for causal inference by documenting district judge compliance to appellate rulings (IRLE 2022) and measuring the stock market responsiveness to judge assignment on the case completion date (Empirical Legal Analysis 2013) and the non-responsiveness of stock markets to the date of judge assignment (ALER 2017). We propose using predictions of judicial decisions for measuring their consequences (NeurIPS 2019; CU Press 2019; NeurIPS 2020). Using this method, e.g., the text of judges' past writings to predict their current decisions, we show that environmental jurisprudence precipitate short-term reductions in water pollution in India (WP). In building this methodology, we characterize judicial sentiment (Economica 2022) in vector space (Law as Data 2019; EJELS 2024) and document political, consequentialist motivations among judges (RLE 2024). Other work proposes automated classification of policy levers (WP) and modes of reasoning (Computational Legal Studies 2018) to automate the tool for consequentialist judicial decision-makers.

A secondary thread in law and political economy examines the interplay of markets and morality and spillovers of these ideas on criminal justice. We found that a corporate-sponsored economics program for judges, which trained 40% of U.S. federal judges by 1990, led to a 10% change in outcomes of their economics cases and a 20% increase in sentencing severity when judges had discretion in sentencing (QJE 2024) and that economics-trained judges were harsher towards minorities in sentencing (WP). We also discovered that economics language increased among judges due to peer exposure in random panel compositions (WP), identified persuasive memes that predicted agreement among judges in panels (ICAIL 2017), precipitating in a paradigm shift (WP). We have explored how market forces shape political beliefs (J Ecumenical Studies 2007; WP) and the production of justice (WP). We have also looked at the relationship between markets and justice (U Penn J Business Law 2013), whether markets can stimulate rights (RAND 2015), the influence of markets on moral values (JLEO 2024), and whether markets overcome repugnance (EER 2023). Additionally, we found that disclosure of pharmaceutical company payments to doctors can have different effects depending on the size of the payment and the strength of disclosure laws (JLS 2019) and are currently studying the impact of these payments on prescribing patterns and patient outcomes. We have also coined the term "carceral-community epidemiology" and found that jail cycling is associated with the spread of Covid-19 (Health Affairs 2020) and with Covid-19 disparities in Cook County (PNAS 2021) and nationally (JAMA Network Open 2021). We show that climate change contributes to jail deaths (WP).

A primary thread in law and development probes whether legal institutions matter for economic growth (WP). We examine the potential for digital platforms and AI to increase

access, efficiency, and fairness of justice and reduce market-level constraints to economic development (World Development 2025, National Law School of India Review 2021, Handbook of Measurement 2022; MENA World Bank Flagship Report 2022, Handbook of Courts and AI 2025). Through a randomized judicial reform in Kenya, we have demonstrated that information and accountability can be used to reduce court backlogs by 20% and increase formal sector employment and wages (WP, World Development Report Annex 2022), consistent with correlational evidence on court speed and informality (WP). In India, we show that free legal search can reduce case backlogs, increase access to justice, and have positive impacts on firm assets (JEEA R&R). We have also made India's e-courts data available for analysis (Restat 2024), such as representation in terms of religion and caste in the justice system (EJELS 2024). In Chile, in a randomized trial, we found that reducing information barriers about court performance can increase case clearance by one standard deviation (WP). In addition, we document the positive impact of e-justice platforms in access to justice for small firms (WP), the economic benefits of court construction (WP), and the benefits of chatbots for online dispute resolution (RLE 2024). We show that access to civil justice reduces homelessness (WP) and static judicial productivity quotas adversely impact litigants (WP). Disparities in the justice system has highlighted the role of pro-sociality of civil servants. In Pakistan, we have conducted a series of randomized trials with civil servants, showing that we can effectively train them in altruism (JDE 2024), econometrics (EJ R|R, Management Science R|R), and AI (JDE R&R), and influence their decisions in both lab and field settings. In Peru, we have found that the Socratic method can improve judges' grades and curiosity (WP), and that community of practice can reduce judges' reversal rates and implicit bias (WP). In ongoing work, we are testing the use of smart mediator assignment in Kenya and peer information sharing among conciliators in Peru (RLE R&R).

A secondary thread in law and development is on human rights. I was an early contributor to a growing body of literature on the intersection of economics, religion, and culture (JEBO 2014). I showed how economic factors influence the religious provision of social insurance (JPE 2010), in particular, ex-post social insurance (WP), enhanced by social sanctions (Institutions and Norms 2007), including gender violence (JRD 2020). In randomized control trials, we have found that progressive gender attitudes in teachers can lead to improved inter-gender cooperation and student achievement (AEJ:P 2024), but can also result in negative consequences such as domestic violence and mental stress for those holding novel views on rights (WP). We are currently studying the effects of mental health interventions for civil servants (WP), how social solidarity can enhance the efficacy of pharmacological interventions

(WP), the impact of changing beliefs about others on civil servant performance (WP), and the social preferences of judges (WP). We have shown that legitimacy of courts matter for democratic reform (WP) and that AI clerks and human clerks are deemed equally legitimate (WP). We have also shown that legitimacy of information source matters for teacher's Covid-19 vaccinations, which has spillover impacts on student achievement (PNAS 2024). Likewise, government incentives are not effective in increasing fertility (ITPF 2011) or IVF rates (Minnesota Law Review 2010), while market forces can substantially impact fertility decisions and inequality (AER P&P 1999; JEG 2002), suggesting that in some circumstances, temporarily increasing access to educational opportunities could permanently reduce inequality.