Jonathan Tebes

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

July 2022 - Present	Assistant Research Professor of Economics, University of Notre Dame & The Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO)

EDUCATION

June 2022	Ph.D., Department of Economics, Harvard University Fields: *Labor, Public* Thesis: *"Essays on the Economic and Social Consequences of Policing"* Committee: *Larry Katz, Edward Glaeser, Andrei Shleifer, Desmond Ang*
June 2014	B.S. in Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Labor, Public, Education, Criminal Justice, Political Economy, Economic Mobility

FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS

2021	J-PAL North America Work of the Future Grant, *with Larry Katz and Liz Engle*
2020	Horowitz Foundation Dissertation Prize
2020	Donald R. Cressey Award, Horowitz Foundation
2020	Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Harvard Bok Center
2019	Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Harvard Bok Center
2018	Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Harvard Bok Center
2018	Fellowship, James M. and Cathleen D. Stone PhD Scholar in Inequality
2016	National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship
2014	MIT Undergraduate Economics Association Thesis Award
2013	MIT Public Service Center Fellowship

Publications

"Police Violence and Civic Engagement" with Desmond Ang, *American Political Science Review*, forthcoming.

Abstract: Roughly a thousand people are killed by American law enforcement officers each year, accounting for more than 5% of all homicides. We estimate the causal impact of these events on civic engagement. Exploiting hyper-local variation in how close residents live to a killing, we find that exposure to police violence leads to significant increases in registrations and votes. These effects are driven entirely by Black and Hispanic citizens and are largest for killings of unarmed individuals. We find corresponding increases in support for criminal justice reforms, suggesting that police violence may cause voters to politically mobilize against perceived injustice.

Working Papers

"Stopped by the Police: The End of "Stop-and-Frisk" on Neighborhood Crime and High School Dropout Rates" with Jeffrey Fagan

Abstract: Over 3.5 million pedestrians are stopped by police in the United States every year. This paper explores the effectiveness of using pedestrian stops as a crime deterrence tool. Using administrative data from New York City, we test whether the concentration of pedestrian stops in higher-crime neighborhoods deters neighborhood crime and whether frequent exposure to police stops affects dropout rates of neighborhood high school students. Exploiting a 2012 reform that reduced stops by 95%, we compare neighborhoods that have similar crime rates but substantially different stop rates prior to the reform. Treated neighborhoods that experienced twice the reduction in stop rates do not display differential increases in felonies and violent misdemeanors, shootings, or killings over the five years following the reform. Analysis of police surges, however, indicates that when increased stop rates are accompanied by an increase in patrol officers, serious crime declines. But alone, heightened stop rates have no measurable impact on serious crime. Comparing students across schools that are differentially exposed to changes in stop rates, we estimate that the reform reduced the probability of high school dropout by about 660 students per academic year, carrying an annual social value of over $205 million.

Research in Progress

"The Equity of Police Stops" with Jeffrey Fagan

Abstract: We exploit a 2012 reform that reduced stops by 95% in New York City to examine the equity of racial disparities in stop rates by estimating would-be outcomes of stops that were deterred by the reform. Comparing the accuracy of marginally-deterred stops across races allows us to examine the extent to which racial disparities in stop rates reflect real racial differences in criminal behavior. By instrumenting for neighborhood stop rates with the timing of the reform, we find that Black and Hispanic residents were stopped at substantially higher rates than would be optimal for crime detection; we estimate that in order to equalize marginal returns, the police had to reduce stops of Black and Hispanic pedestrians by 55% or a combined 298,000 stops per year.

"Supporting Pathways out of Poverty: Randomized Evaluation of Mobility Mentoring" with Larry Katz and Liz Engle

Abstract: Current public support services tend to address a particular symptom of poverty rather than central causes. This paper explores whether holistic, individualized mentoring combined with monetary incentives can help low-income public housing residents achieve economic self-sufficiency. The intervention – Mobility Mentoring – includes an individualized coaching plan, weekly meetings with mentors to set goals and assess progress, and temporary financial assistance to help participants overcome financial obstacles and to incentivize goals. We evaluate the intervention through a randomized experiment. With the assistance of the Boston Housing Authority (BHA), we recruited public housing and voucher recipients who are able to work and randomly assign half to treatment. Treatment group participants may receive three years of Mobility Mentoring services, while control group participants receive the services usually available to them in the community. Drawing on administrative tax data, our primary outcomes explore the impact of the program on employment, earnings, and household income. We will also examine impacts on financial health, housing stability, public benefit receipt, and survey measures of health and well-being. We plan to follow study participants for ten years from random assignment in administrative data sources, allowing us to assess whether the intervention generates economic self-sufficiency in the long-run.

"Debt after Death: Randomized Evidence on Emergency Financial Assistance for the Urban Poor" with Mary Kate Batistich

Abstract: Widespread financial fragility in the United States, in which 40% of households report being unable to cover an emergency $400 expense, could leave middle and low-income households vulnerable to poverty traps brought on by unplanned shocks that lead to a cycle of debt and poor financial standing. However,

there is little causal evidence on the implications of unanticipated financial shocks for low-income individuals, and even less evidence on emergency financial assistance provided at the time of the shock. In this paper, we partner with a non-profit that provides financial assistance for burial and funeral (BaF) services to individuals with household incomes below 40% AMI in a large U.S. city. Using a randomized controlled trail, half of study participants will randomly receive $1000 towards BaF expenses, while the other half will receive up to $8000 towards their BaF bill. Historically, BaF bills typically cost about $5500, meaning that we expect the average difference in support between treatment and control groups to be about $4500. Using administrative records, we will passively track impacts on an credit outcomes, income, employment, public assistance, and housing stability. We anticipate that funding will support a sample size of 590 participants, enabling us to detect a 0.22 standard deviation change in a standardized credit index. We will also explore the potential of matched sample that does not experience a death in the family, allowing us to estimate the impact of the shock itself.

"Academics and Athletics: A Randomized Trial of Multi-Faceted Mentorship" with Noam Angrist

Abstract: This study evaluates a novel mentorship program combining athletics and academics to close achievement gaps among urban public high school students in the U.S., a setting where racial achievement gaps have persisted for over 20 years. We estimate the causal effect on GPAs – a consequential outcome capturing both academic and non-academic performance in school – by leveraging randomized lotteries run to determine program admission. Results from a pilot show large effects on standardized GPAs of 0.50 standard deviation (p-value= 0.016). This translates to students moving from a "C+" to "B" average. The majority of students are Black and Hispanic, and a single semester of attending the program closes 45-70% of the racial achievement gap. The program ranks among the most cost-effective education interventions in the literature, since it reduces cost by leveraging college volunteer mentors and boosts impact by coupling both cognitive and non-cognitive skill acquisition. We plan to collect additional administrative records to expand this analysis to a larger sample and broader array of outcomes, including high school attendance and disciplinary actions, on-time grade progression and graduation, college going and completion, and social networks.

"Mentoring Across Lines of Difference: Evidence from A Comprehensive Mentorship Program for Students At Risk of Dropping Out of High School" with Bill Evans and Sarah Kroeger

Description: This study examines the short and medium-run impacts of Thread's innovative mentorship program designed to help disadvantaged high school students bridge opportunity and achievement gaps in Baltimore, Maryland. Thread works with students who have GPAs in the bottom quartile after the first half of their 9th grade school year. Historically, the four-year graduation rate for these students is just 5%. Enrolled students are assigned a Thread "family", a network of up to five community volunteers, who support students for up to 10 years. Volunteer families help students work towards finishing high school and then enrolling in post-secondary education, gaining meaningful employment, or joining the military. Thread family members provide support in numerous ways, including providing rides to activities, packing lunches, linking students to existing programs and services (e.g. summer school, summer employment, housing, etc.), as well as generally being a listening ear and helping hand. A key aim of the program is to facilitate long-term connections across lines of difference, with a goal of providing a high-SES social network for youth who are otherwise socioeconomically isolated. To evaluate this program, we are implementing prospective randomized control trial (RCT) as well as a retrospective quasi-experimental analysis that exploits the staggered roll out of Thread across three Baltimore public high schools from 2003 through 2015. The retrospective analysis will compare outcomes across students who attend same school but differ in access to Thread because of their 9th grade cohort. Using historical records, we estimate that there are 1053 students in "treated" cohorts and 1563 students in control cohorts, with a 24.2% take-up rate among treated students. This sample size is powered to detect a 9.8 percentage point increase in four-year graduation rates among those who take-up the program (and a 2.4 percentage point average difference between treatment and control cohort), well below the 52 percentage point differences observed between program participants and students with similar 9th grade GPAs. In addition to graduation rates, we are interested in examining impacts on other educational and early-life outcomes, including standardized test scores, high school attendance and disciplinary actions, college going and completion, adult criminal justice contact, employment, earnings, and mortality.

"The Effect of Low-level Arrests on the Early-life Trajectory of Urban Youth: Evidence from Administrative Tax and Arrest Records" with Benny Goldman

Description: We study the downstream effects of being arrested for a minor offense as a teenager on adult earnings, employment, and incarceration. Prior research tends to use judge IV designs that estimate the effects of judge decisions (e.g., bail, incarceration, etc.) on defendants who, in many cases, are already tied up in the criminal justice (CJ) system. In this paper, we focus on teenagers who are plausibly interacting with the CJ system for the first time and ask whether strict enforcement of minor offenses for teenagers generates a criminal justice poverty trap that prevents disadvantaged teenagers from living more productive lives. We will use the drawdown of stop and frisk policies in New York City, which prior research has shown leads to no change in serious crime but to large reductions in the number of citations and arrests for low-level offenses, as a plausibly exogenous shock to the probability a teenager is arrested for a minor offense. A second source of experimental variation will exploit maps of police surges that identify areas where the police allocated additional patrol officers. Matching teenage residents on either side of a police surge border provides a natural experiment where teenagers living in the surge zone are more likely to be arrested for minor offenses but are otherwise similar to teenagers living near (but outside) the zone. We will explore heterogeneous effects by race, sex, and predicted criminality, and will quantify the extent to which enforcement of low-level offenses mediate neighborhood rates of upward mobility.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Referee Service

Quarterly Journal of Economics; American Economic Review: Insights; American Economic Journal: Applied Economics; Review of Economics and Statistics; Journal of Urban Economics; Journal of Political Economic: Microeconomics

Invited Presentations

2023	Determinants and Effectiveness of Police Enforcement Behavior, ASSA 2023 Annual Meeting; Center for Health Economics Policy Studies, San Diego State University; Policing and Crime Workshop, London School of Economics and Political Science; Mid-Midwest Applied Micro Conference, Purdue University; Conference on the Economics of Crime and Justice, Becker Friedman Institute at the University of Chicago; NBER Summer Institute, Crime Session;
2022	Applied Micro Seminar, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; Applied Micro Seminar, Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, UVA; Applied Micro Seminar, University of Notre Dame
2021	Labor and Public Finance Seminar, Harvard University; Labor and Public Finance Lunch, Harvard University; Criminal Justice and Policing Lunch, Harvard Kennedy School
2017 – 2020	Labor and Public Finance Lunch, Harvard University; Criminal Justice Seminar, Liman Center for Public Interest Law, Yale University; Criminal Justice and Policing Lunch, Harvard Kennedy School

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Fall 2018 – 2020	"Ec 2810a: Labor Market Analysis", Graduate Course, Harvard University, Teaching Fellow for Larry Katz, Teaching Award (2018, 2019, 2020)

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Citizenship: U.S.A.
Date of Birth: May 1992
Hobbies: Basketball, running, soccer, non-fiction, hiking