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***Course of Study:***

I have pursued graduate course work at the intersection of law, economic sociology and public policy. As an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania, I jointly pursued a Master of Arts in Criminology. Beginning graduate work early in my academic career provided me with the quantitative training that I have needed for later research, as well as instilled in me an evidence-based approach to policy. Much of the criminology course work necessary for the master’s degree was designed and taught by faculty members associated with the Jerry Lee Center of Criminology, which houses a number of large datasets important to current criminological research. For example, I was able to utilize data from the Canberra Reintegrative Shaming Experiments (RISE), which was a randomized-controlled experiment conducted in Australia to analyze the effects of diversionary restorative justice conferences on recidivism.

After graduation from Penn, I enrolled in the Sociology Ph.D. program at the University of California-Los Angeles. My main advisor and dissertation chair is Lynne Zucker, a sociologist affiliated with the National Bureau of Economic Research. Dr. Zucker has encouraged me to pursue course work related to organizational sociology and economic sociology. This has included courses in cultural sociology, organizational theory, the sociology of knowledge, and social movements. This focus prepared me for two qualifying exams. The first exam was in the sociology of science with a specialization in the professionalization of science industries. The second exam was in economic sociology with a focus in markets, organizations and economic behavior. My economic sociology field exam reading list was composed of scholarly articles on copyright and patents, which comports with the Economics of Digitization Agenda for NSF that was the impetus behind the Digitization Tutorial (Greenstein, Lerner, & Stern 2010).

I am currently a fifth-year student and Ph.D. candidate in Sociology at UCLA. I successfully defended my dissertation proposal and advanced to candidacy earlier this month, November 2016. My dissertation is preliminarily titled, “Social Analyses of the Behavior of Law and Regulation: Parsing the Processes of Formulation, Application and Interpretation of Legal Rules.” It is chaired by Dr. Lynne Zucker (Sociology/Public Policy). My dissertation committee includes Dr. Steven Clayman (Sociology), Dr. Gabriel Rossman (Sociology), Dr. Christopher Erickson (Anderson School of Management), and Dr. Maximo Langer (UCLA School of Law).

The opportunity to participate in the Economics of Digitization graduate student tutorial would greatly benefit me, as I am still trying to define the last chapter of my dissertation. Attendance at this event would provide me with an overview of this area of research and connect me with leaders of the field, allowing me to develop a project that will be useful to them in further pushing the boundaries of this area of research. My hope is that my project can answer research questions of importance to this scholarly community.

***General Research Interests and Projects Pursued:***

My general research interests are still broadly related to the intersection of law, economic sociology and public policy. I expect to complete my dissertation in June 2018. My dissertation looks at the relationship between legal policies as envisioned with outcomes once enacted. Although I am trained as a sociologist, I will push my dissertation to speak to issues of interest to scholars of law and economics.

The part of my dissertation that I am currently working on studies the diffusion of legal statutes and other policies pertaining to the rights, entitlements, responsibilities and protections of children within state-level jurisdictions. This project represents an effort to continue research that I previously undertook for my Master’s Paper at UCLA. For this paper, I analyzed the diffusion of driving under the influence (DUI) child-endangerment statutes across United States state-level criminal jurisdictions. Prior to the enactment of these statutes, both DUI and child endangerment were separately criminalized. However, during the 1990s and 2000s, 38 states and the District of Columbia adopted these novel statutes that identified a direct and joint relationship between these two criminal actions somewhere within their criminal code. My research showed that the passage of these joint statutes was not related to objective incidence of either DUI or child endangerment as a social problem (and further, had no effect in reducing them), but rather whether surrounding states also had the law (which could be easily copied by another state) and whether state legislative elections occurred during the year of enactment. From a practical perspective this makes sense, since legislators often look to their neighbors when creating policy (Boushey 2010). This particular law can be seen as a “political winner” of an issue that would allow a politician to rally their base because there is no lobby fighting for adults to have the right to drive drunk with minors in their vehicles. In my dissertation, I will expand this project to look more broadly at the nature of childhood by studying the diffusion of additional legal policies and statutes related to children by state governments. I am interested in including policies governing digitization and its effect on children since this will undoubtedly be an issue that needs to be addressed as digitization increases and thus, market structure and conduct continues to change (Greenstein, Lerner, & Stern 2010).

A second project in my dissertation studies inter- and transnational corruption. This project analyzes enforcement actions for this criminal offense taken by the United States under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) of 1977, which prohibits bribery of foreign officials, foreign political parties, officials of foreign political parties, or candidates for foreign political office (Choi and Davis 2014). My research questions for this project address how differences in cultural understandings of corruption and culturally-based legal definitions are approached and resolved in contexts where one country (United States) asserts a right to prosecute actions that occur in other countries by citizens of that country and are legal under the laws of that country. As markets have become increasingly digitized, such international relations issues have become more common and are predicted to further increase in frequency. Thus, it is important to develop policies that keep up with technological advances that allow for new opportunities for corrupt actions. Since markets where corruption occurs are greatly affected by digitization, I believe that exposure to the NBER project on the Economics of Digitization can inform this research.

**References:**

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