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EDUCATION

Princeton University

PhD, Economics (Expected Date) 2013
MA, Economics 2010
General Examinations: Labor Economics, Development Economics
Advisors: Henry Farber and David Lee

Brown University

BS, Applied Mathematics & Economics with Honors, *Magna Cum Laude* 2004

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Public Finance, Behavioral Economics, Labor Economics, Health Economics

JOB MARKET PAPER

Can Small Incentives Have Large Effects? The Impact of Taxes Versus Bonuses on the Demand for Disposable Bags

Financial incentives are an important policy tool for encouraging prosocial behavior. However, evidence on the effect of very small financial incentives is mixed. Drawing on an original data set, I investigate the effect of a five-cent shopping bag tax imposed in the Washington Metropolitan Area. Despite the small size of the incentive, I find that the tax decreased the fraction of customers using a disposable bag by a substantial amount. In contrast, a similar policy that offered customers a five-cent bonus for reusable bag use generated virtually no effect on behavior, evidence consistent with a model of loss aversion. This disparity underscores the importance of the form a financial incentive takes – a tax versus a bonus – when designing policies aimed at shaping consumer behavior.

PUBLICATIONS

Smoke Gets in Your Eyes: Cigarette Tax Salience and Regressivity (with Jacob Goldin)
(Forthcoming: *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*)
Recent evidence suggests consumers pay less attention to commodity taxes levied at the register than to taxes included in a good's posted price. If this attention gap is larger for high-income consumers than for low-income consumers, policymakers can manipulate a tax's regressivity by altering the fraction of the tax imposed at the register. We investigate income differences in attentiveness to cigarette taxes, exploiting state and time variation in cigarette excise and sales tax rates. Whereas all consumers respond to taxes that appear in cigarettes' posted price, our results suggest that only low-income consumers respond to taxes levied at the register.

WORK IN PROGRESS

The Effect of Recent Sin Taxes: Implications for Policy Design

The Effect of Payday Loan Bans on the Use of High-Interest Credit (with Jacob Goldin)

Electronic Benefit Transfers and WIC Participation

NON-PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Different Settings, Common Strategy: Using Earnings Supplements to Improve Employment Retention and Advancement Programs in Texas and the United Kingdom. 2010. MDRC. New York, NY. (with Erica Lundquist)

Two-year Impacts of the UK Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) Demonstration: New Deal 25 Plus Customers. 2008. UK Department of Work and Pensions. (with Cynthia Miller, Helen Bewley, Verity Campbell-Barr, Richard Dorsett, Gayle Hamilton, Lesley Hoggart, Alan Marsh, Kathryn Ray, James A. Riccio, and Sandra Vegeris)

WORK EXPERIENCE

Princeton University, Princeton, NJ
Research Assistant, Professor Janet Currie 2010
Research Assistant, Professor Henry Farber 2009
MDRC, Social Policy Research, New York, NY 2006-2008
Research Analyst, Low-wage Workers and Communities Policy Area
Analysis Group, Economic Consulting and Litigation, New York, NY 2004-2006
Research Analyst, Labor Economics and Securities Litigation

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Princeton University, Princeton, NJ
Introduction to Microeconomics (ECO100), Professor Robert Willig 2011
Junior Independent Workshop (ECO981), Professor Nancy Reichman 2010-2011

AWARDS AND HONORS

Clarence J. Hicks Fellowship in Industrial Relations, Princeton University 2012-2013
Fellowship of the Woodrow Wilson Scholars, Princeton University 2011-2013
Fellowship in Social Policy and Economics, Princeton University 2010-2011
Industrial Relations Section Grant, Princeton University 2008-2013
Princeton University Graduate Fellowship 2008-2013
Princeton University Summer Fellowship 2008-2013
Phi Beta Kappa, Brown University 2004
Sigma Xi Sciences Honors Society, Brown University 2004
Omicron Delta Epsilon Economics Honors Society, Brown University 2004
Samuel C. Lamport Prize in International Understanding (Economics Department Thesis Award), Brown University 2004

PRESENTATIONS

The Effect of Environmental Sin Taxes: Evidence from the D.C. Area Shopping Bag Tax, National Tax Association Conference on Taxation, Providence, RI, 2012.

Assessing Progress Towards Neighborhood Diversification Goals, (with Nandita Verma and George Galster), Association for Public Policy and Management, Los Angeles, CA, 2008.

Financial Incentives as a Tool for Encouraging Employment Retention and Advancement among Welfare Recipients: A Cross-National Comparison (with Gayle Hamilton and Erika Lundquist), Association for Public Policy and Management, Washington, D.C., 2007.

REFERENCES

Professor Henry Farber (Advisor)
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Professor David Lee (Advisor)
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