

Briggs Depew

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Personal Information

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Education

University of Arizona
PhD in Economics, Current
MA in Economics, 2010

Brigham Young University–Idaho
BS in Economics, 2008
Summa Cum Laude

Teaching and Research Fields

Primary Field: Labor Economics

Secondary Fields: Econometrics & Economic History

Working Papers

“Elasticity of Labor Supply to the Firm Over the Business Cycle,” (**Job Market Paper**)
with Todd Sorensen, University of California Riverside, (*Under Review*)

A body of recent empirical work has found strong evidence that the elasticity of labor supply to the firm is finite, implying that firms may have wage setting power. However, these studies capture only snapshots of the parameter. We study this parameter over a period that provides substantial variation in the business cycle. Using a rich employee level dataset from the inter-war period, we are able to estimate the elasticity of labor supply to the firm during several recessions and expansions. Our analysis suggests that the elasticity is indeed lower during recessions. This finding is consistent with the comparative statics from the Burdett-Mortensen search model. This differential wage setting power over the business cycle provides an alternative explanation of the pro-cyclicality of wages. Our analysis also contributes a methodological extension to the empirical monopsony literature by deriving a more general relationship between the elasticity of separation and the elasticity of labor supply to the firm.

“Do Decreased Immigration Restrictions Lower Immigrant Quality? Evidence from a Natural Experiment of Pacific Island Immigrants,” (*Under Review*)

In this paper I exploit a relatively unknown policy change which provides a natural experiment to study the effect of decreasing immigration restrictions on the quality, as measured by education levels, of new immigrants. In 1986, the United States agreed to exempt citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands from meeting U.S. passport, visa, and labor certification requirements. The identification strategy relies on a difference-in-difference framework with two contrasting control groups. Results suggest that the policy had an substantial impact on the composition of entering immigrants.

“New Deal or No Deal in the Cotton South: The Effect of the AAA on the Agriculture Labor Structure”

With limited empirical evidence, the policies of the Agriculture Adjustment Act and mechanization have often been held responsible for the rapid reduction of agriculture tenants and croppers (laborers paid shares of the crop). In this paper I estimate the impact of a AAA policy on the displacement of these workers in the cotton south. I motivate the empirical analysis by first analyzing a simple on-the-job search model which shows how the cotton reduction program of the AAA incentivized landlords to displace tenants. The distribution of AAA funds was not exogenous as they were distributed through local agents who may have been influenced by composition of farmers in the county. I construct an instrument based on the amount of funds that a county was supposed to receive under the AAA rules. The results suggest that the AAA played a significant role in the displacement of black and white croppers and black managing tenants. These results are of particular interest given that it was a violation of AAA contracts for landlords to displace these workers.

Work in Progress

- “The Effect of School Violence on Educational Attainment”
- “Dependent Health Coverage and Labor Force Participation”
- “Wage Markdowns and Non-Competitive Labor Markets in the 1920s” with Todd Sorensen, University of California-Riverside
- “From the Laboratory to the Fields: The role of the Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Association in the Dissemination of Agricultural Innovation,” with Ben Zamzow, University of Arizona (Ph.D. Student)

Conference Presentations

- Southern Economic Association Meetings (scheduled) [November 2011], “*New Deal or No Deal in the Cotton South: The Effect of the AAA on the Agriculture Labor Structure*”
- Economic History Association Meetings - Poster Session [September 2011], “*The Elasticity of Supply to the Firm and the Business Cycle*”
- Western Economic Association Meetings [July 2011], “*The Elasticity of Supply to the Firm and the Business Cycle*”
- University of Arizona 3rd Year Paper Conference [March 2011], “*Racial Wage Gaps, Labor Market Frictions, and Macroeconomic Fluctuations*”
- All UC and Asia-Pacific Economic and Business History [February 2011], “*Do Decreased Immigration Restrictions Lower Immigrant Quality? Evidence from Pacific Islanders in the United States*”
- University of Arizona 2nd Year Paper Conference [April 2010], “*New Deal or No Deal in the Cotton South: The Effect of the AAA on the Agriculture Labor Structure*”

Teaching Experience and Evaluations

- University of Arizona
 - Econometrics (418) - (Fall 2011)
 - Statistical Inference (276) - 37 students 4.5/5 (Summer 2011)
 - Labor Economics (482) - 45 students 4.6/5 (Spring 2011)
 - Labor Economics (482) - 28 students: 4.7/5 (Fall 2010)
 - Intermediate Micro for Business Majors (300) - 61 students: 4.3/5 (Summer 2010)
 - Economics of Sports (323) - 29 students: 4.8/5 (Winter 2009)
 - Intermediate Micro for Business Majors (300) - 27 students: 4.4/5 (Summer 2009)

Teaching and Research Assistantship

- Head teaching assistant to Gerry Swanson (Econ 200 large lecture) - (2008-2010)
- Research assistant to Price Fishback - (2009-2010)

Honors and Fellowships

- University of Arizona
 - Don Wells Teaching Fellowship for Excellence in Teaching (current)
 - Zajac Award, Best 3rd Year Paper (2011)
 - Don Wells Teaching Fellowship for Excellence in Teaching (Spring 2011)
 - Don Wells Teaching Fellowship for Excellence in Teaching (Fall 2010)
 - Brown Fellowship for Devotion to Teaching (2009-2010)
 - Brown Fellowship for Devotion to Teaching (2008-2009)
 - Department of Economics Fellowship (2008-2009)
- Brigham Young University-Idaho
 - University Academic Scholarship (2006-2008)
 - *4.0 GPA, Graduation Speaker*

Software Skills

- Packages: Stata, Matlab, R
- Programming: UNIX, LaTeX

References:

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