

PPE Research Seminar Series

The Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) Research Seminar Series provides a forum for eminent scholars across these disciplines to present their work in a flexible format with faculty and students.

How Race of Prosecutor Shapes Carceral Outcomes

Abstract: The central problematic is that contact with policing and the probability of experiencing an arrest are geographically and racially concentrated. Notwithstanding, the decision to charge is completely up to the prosecuting attorney. We question whether prosecutors are more willing to bring low-quality charges against minority defendants compared to White defendants. Moreover, we question whether electoral pressures influence the likelihood that prosecutors will charge low-quality cases against minority defendants. We utilize the Collaborative Multi-Racial Post-Election Survey 2020 (CMPS), a national survey on political and social issues conducted post the 2020 presidential election, to investigate these questions. Our results show that White prosecutors are more likely to charge Black and Hispanic defendants but are significantly more likely to get convictions against Asian defendants. This suggests that White prosecutors bring more lower quality cases against Blacks and Hispanics compared to Asian defendants. We find that minority prosecutors are not significantly more likely to charge minority defendants, but Latino prosecutors are more likely to win convictions against minority defendants. When estimating the electoral effects, we find increased probabilities of charges but no corresponding increases in the likelihood of convictions. The results show that White prosecutors overcharge minorities and simultaneously gain fewer convictions than their racial peers. Our findings have serious implications for the study prosecutors, representative bureaucracy, mass incarceration, and policing.



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Fri. Sept 20th | 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. PST
Virtually via Zoom, [Advanced Registration](#)

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