

Hassan Sayed

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Employment

Center for Global Development 2025-
Postdoctoral Scholar, Market Shaping Accelerator (× Dartmouth, UChicago)

Education

Princeton University 2019-25
PhD Candidate in Economics. Fields: Economic Theory, Political Economy.

Northwestern University 2015-19
B.A. in Economics, Mathematics, Mathematical Methods in the Social Sciences.

References

Professor Leah Boustan
Department of Economics
Princeton University
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Professor Ilyana Kuziemko
Department of Economics
Princeton University
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Professor Pietro Ortoleva
Department of Economics
Princeton University
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Working Papers

1. **“Learning Traps.”** 2025. **Revise and Resubmit, American Journal of Political Science.**

Under policy uncertainty, policy choices generate a tradeoff between payoffs and information. Incumbent leaders can implement their preferred policy, but if the outcome is bad, constituents learn this and threaten office removal. I show that, in a repeated setting, the optimal policy of leaders constrained by this threat of information revelation is non-monotone in beliefs about policy efficacy. At extremal beliefs, leaders experiment with the most extreme policy that keeps them in office. At middle beliefs, they implement spatially intermediate “learning trap” policies that halt learning about the optimal policy when it would be most useful. I apply the model to the post-1861 reforms ending serfdom in Imperial Russia, arguing that by combining elements of liberalism and serfdom to obfuscate inference about policy efficacy, these reforms represent a learning trap, in contrast to the pre-1861 status quo of serfdom and post-1906 experiments with liberal economic reform.

2. **“Persuasion with Partisanship: The Informational Content of Policymaking with Application to US Governors.”** 2025.

I study a model where a political executive’s policy agenda generates information about her ability. Since policies favoring a single party are harder to pass, the partisanship of an agenda influences what success or failure of passage communicates about ability. The model delivers a U-shape relationship between an executive’s ex-ante winning chances and her agenda’s partisanship. Executives likely to lose pursue partisan policies to save

their winning chances. Those likely to win embrace partisan policies whose failure can be blamed on the legislature. Those in the middle pursue bipartisan policies to secure reelection. I use these insights to analyze the partisanship of U.S. governors' policy proposals from 1990-2020, showing that while partisanship has risen on average, there is sizeable variation at the governor level. I interpret these variations as responses to electoral incentives by testing the model and showing a U-shaped relationship between partisanship and approval ratings.

3. ["Transgressions in Organizations."](#) With Kim Sarnoff. 2025.

We study an organizational model where managers commit workplace against employees, or "transgressions." Employees can report transgressive managers for investigation and possible punishment. When employees' disutility from transgressions is low, we show that policies that disincentivize managers from committing transgressions — increasing the size of manager punishment, the ease of reporting, or the efficacy of investigation technology — may harm employees. These policies may motivate managers to commit harmful actions that employees do not want to report or induce managers to opt out of interacting with employees altogether. We provide a dynamic extension where reports generate information for the organization and employees, showing that the model converges to a steady state where employees are worse off than initially, harmful actions are never punished, and no organizational learning occurs.

4. ["A New Interpretation of Productivity Growth Dynamics in the Pre-Pandemic and Pandemic-Era U.S. Economy, 1950-2023."](#) With Robert J. Gordon. 2024. NBER WP 30267, CEPR DP19569.

This paper provides a unified framework that resolves why productivity growth in 2010-19 was some of the slowest in American history, why its cyclicity changed from procyclical in 1950-85 to acyclical in 1986-2006 to procyclical in 2010-19, and why it was strongly countercyclical in the recessions of 2008-09 and 2020. The fundamental dynamic driving cyclical productivity fluctuations originates in the gradual adjustment of hours of work to demand-driven output fluctuations due to labor frictions. We are able to explain the temporary 1986-2006 disappearance of procyclicality as the result of changes in the standard deviation and serial correlation of output changes. We explain countercyclical productivity surges in 2008-09 and 2020 by showing that business firms in those two episodes overreacted with "excess layoffs," cutting hours in response to the sharp output decline with a much higher elasticity than normal. By coupling these excess layoffs with a post-recession rehiring effect that gradually unwound the excess layoffs, our regression analysis explains why productivity growth on average was so slow in 2010-19. In the absence of excess layoffs, productivity growth in the 2010-19 decade would have been 1.9 percent per year instead of 1.1 percent, suggesting that concern about U.S. "secular stagnation" has been overstated.

Publications

1. ["Transatlantic Technologies: The Role of ICT in the Evolution of U.S. and European Productivity Growth."](#) With Robert J. Gordon. *International Productivity Monitor* No. 38, Spring 2020.

2. "The Industry Anatomy of the Transatlantic Productivity Growth Slowdown: Europe Chasing the American Frontier." With Robert J. Gordon. *International Productivity Monitor* No. 37, Fall 2019.

Work in Progress

1. "Inverted Digital Property Rights."
2. "Model Based Inference."

Research Experience

- 2022 Research Assistant, Prof. Roland Bénabou (Princeton)
2017-19 Research Assistant, Prof. Robert J. Gordon (Northwestern)

Teaching

- Princeton SPI 511b: Microeconomic Analysis for Policymakers (TA, Fall 2024)
Northwestern MATH 220: Single-Variable Calculus (TA: Fall 2016)
 MATH 224: Single-Variable Integral Calculus (TA: Winter 2017, Fall 2017)
 MATH 230: Multivariable Calculus (TA: Spring 2018, Winter 2019)

Honors, Scholarships, Fellowships, and Grants

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| National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship | 2019–24 |
| Research Program in Political Economy Grant, Princeton | 2024 |
| William S. Dietrich II Economic Theory Center Research Grant | 2022-24 |
| Princeton University Graduate Fellowship | 2019-21 |
| Frederick S. Deibler Award for Distinguished Honors Thesis, Northwestern | 2019 |
| Interdisciplinary Honors, Northwestern | 2019 |
| Phi Beta Kappa, Northwestern | 2019 |

Professional Activities

Presentations

- 2025 36th Stony Brook International Conference on Game Theory, Princeton Microeconomic Theory, Princeton Political Economy
- 2024 Princeton Industrial Relations Seminar, Princeton Microeconomic Theory, Princeton Political Economy
- 2023 North American Summer Meetings of the Econometrics Society, Princeton Microeconomic Theory, Princeton Political Economy
- 2022 Association for Comparative Economic Studies, Princeton Microeconomic Theory, Princeton Political Economy, Young Economist Symposium
- 2021 Princeton Microeconomic Theory

Referee Services

American Economic Review

News Articles

1. "Transatlantic Technologies: The Role of ICT in the Evolution of U.S. and European Productivity Growth." With Robert J. Gordon. *International Productivity Monitor* No. 38, Spring 2020.
2. "The Industry Anatomy of the Transatlantic Productivity Growth Slowdown: Europe Chasing the American Frontier." With Robert J. Gordon. *International Productivity Monitor* No. 37, Fall 2019.

Skills and Activities

- Languages** English, Urdu; MATLAB, Python, STATA
- Citizenship** United States
- Activities** Princeton Lawrence Apartments Committee (Secretary 2021-22, President 2022-24); Adobe Creative Suite; Professional Photography

Last updated: July 2025