

## Workshop on Behavioral Economics: Exploring Applications and Research Methods

### Speaker Biographical Sketches



#### **Saurabh Bhargava**

Carnegie Mellon University

Saurabh Bhargava is an Associate Professor of Economics at Carnegie Mellon University, an academic affiliate of the Jameel Poverty Action Lab at MIT, and the Founder and Co-Director of the BEDR Policy Lab. Dr. Bhargava's primary research area of Behavioral Economics broadly explores decision-making, and optimal policy design, in the contexts of health insurance, retirement savings, program take-up, unemployment, medical adherence, and employee reward programs.

Dr. Bhargava's work has been published in journals such as *JAMA*, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *The American Economic Review*, *Psychological Science*, and *NEJM Catalyst* and has received coverage from media outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Vox*, *CNBC*, *Bloomberg*, *Barron's*, *BBC News*, *New York Magazine*, *NPR*, and *Politico*. He has also published in the *Harvard Business Review* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

Formerly, he was a Visiting Scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation and an adjunct faculty member at the Booth School of Business at the University of Chicago. Prior to starting his academic career, he worked at McKinsey & Co.



#### **Ben Castleman**

University of Virginia

Ben Castleman is the Newton and Rita Meyers Associate Professor in the Economics of Education at the University of Virginia, and the Founder and Director of the [Nudge4 Solutions Lab](#) at UVA. He is the Faculty Director of the University of Virginia-US Army Partnership on Veterans' Education. Ben's research develops scalable education and workforce solutions by

leveraging behavioral economics and data science strategies in the context of research-

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policy partnerships. He was a senior advisor to Former First Lady Michelle Obama's Reach Higher Initiative. Ben has presented about his research at several White House convenings and in testimony before Congress.

Ben's research has appeared in top public policy and economics journals, including *The Journal of Labor Economics*, *The Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, and *The Journal of Human Resources*. Ben's research has been generously supported by numerous philanthropic foundations and has received extensive media coverage, including *The New York Times*, *National Public Radio*, *Time Magazine*, and *The Washington Post*.

Ben is a graduate of Brown University, and completed his doctoral work at Harvard University. Before returning to graduate school, he was a public school teacher and administrator in Providence, RI.



**Lisa Gennetian**  
Duke University

Lisa A. Gennetian, an economist, is the Pritzker Professor of Early Learning Policy Studies and Professor of Public Policy at Duke University. Her research focuses on child poverty, the economic behavior of families, the implications of these behaviors and resulting investments on children's development, and their intersection with social policies and programs. Her work applies insights from behavioral economics to enhance the design and impact of social policy and early childhood interventions. She is a Principal

Investigator of Baby's First Years, a multi-disciplinary multi-site landmark random assignment study in the U.S. of a monthly unconditional cash transfer to low income families over the course of their child's early childhood. She is an investigator with the federally funded National Center for Research on Hispanic Families and Children. Dr. Gennetian is an affiliated professor of J-PAL North America (Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab) and a Research Associate of the National Bureau of Economic Research Children's Program.



**Michael Hallsworth**  
The Behavioral Insights Team

Michael Hallsworth, PhD, is Managing Director (Americas) at the Behavioral Insights Team (BIT). BIT was set up by the then UK Prime Minister in 2010 as the first government institution dedicated to applying behavioral sciences. BIT is now a world-leading organization that helps organizations to apply behavioral science in support of social purpose goals. Michael has been a leading figure in developing the field of

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applying behavioral science to government. He is the co-author of the book *Behavioral Insights* (MIT Press, 2020) and has created several influential frameworks such as the *MINDSPACE* report (cited more than 1,600 times to date). His work has been published in, among others, the *Journal of Public Economics*, *The Lancet*, and *Nature Human Behaviour*. Michael has a PhD in behavioral economics from Imperial College London and was previously an Assistant Professor (Adjunct) at Columbia University, a senior policy official in the UK government, and a researcher at the Institute for Government and the RAND Corporation.



### Channing Jang

The Busara Center for Behavioral Economics

We're all weird in our own way. Sitting at the intersection of behavioral science and development, I'm weird in the most pedestrian way – I'm your typical Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic human trying to build an organization that's anything but. We make it a point at Busara to build a behavioral science organization rooted in the context of the lives of the people we want to serve. As CEO of Busara, my job is to support over one hundred talented humans that serve our mission to advance and apply behavioral science in pursuit of poverty alleviation. I've been fortunate to work on projects spanning from mental health, to financial inclusion to natural resource management. I currently support the [VAX-UP initiative](#), which is home to the [Little Jab Book](#) and its country offshoots in Kenya, the Philippines, Nepal and the MENA region and serve on the advisory council of the [Vaccine Confidence Fund](#). I also coordinate our collaboration with [MIT GOV/LAB](#) and taught our jointly held Behavioral Science in the Field course in 2020. I lead our contribution to the [Science of Behavior Change](#) research network, in particular the work on the measures repository aimed at creating tools to make measuring behavior change easier and more open. I've published on a variety of topics intersecting development and behavioral economics, from work on the [origins of social preferences](#), exploring the effects of [health insurance](#), or [positive psychology](#), to basic science [research on measures](#) and [cross-cultural many labs](#) studies. While building the early Busara, I completed my PhD in Economics at the University of Hawaii, Manoa, and a postdoc in Psychology and Public Affairs at Princeton University.



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#### **Åsa Löfgren**

University of Gothenburg

Åsa Löfgren is an Associate Professor at the Department of Economics, University of Gothenburg. She is an expert in the area of climate economics; in particular, she focuses on climate change and efficient environmental regulation including behavioral aspects and distributional outcomes of climate policies. Löfgren is the principal investigator and part of the management teams of the Centre for Collective Action Research at the University of Gothenburg, and also the Mistra Carbon Exit Research Program. Löfgren publishes her work in international peer-reviewed journals, as well as book chapters, policy papers, and reports, and she regularly serves as experts on various boards and committees. She served as a council member of the Swedish Climate Policy Council 2018-2020 and is currently appointed board member of the Advisory Council of the Swedish Energy Agency (advising the Director General).



#### **Aurélie Ouss**

The University of Pennsylvania

Aurélie Ouss is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Criminology at the University of Pennsylvania. Her research examines how good design of criminal justice institutions and policies can make law enforcement fairer and more efficient. Previously, she was a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Chicago Crime Lab, working with Jens Ludwig. She received her PhD in economics in 2013 at the Harvard Department of Economics, under the guidance of Larry Katz, Roland Fryer, Sendhil Mullainathan and Bruce Western. Before graduate school, she worked as a research assistant for MIT's Poverty Action Lab (JPAL), running field experiments on microcredits and conditional cash transfers in rural Morocco. She received a BA in Economics and Sociology from Ecole Normale Supérieure, and an MA in Economics from the Paris School of Economics.

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#### **Jolene Pomeroy**

Mesa City Nudge Team

Jolene Pomeroy, BS, MBA, CSSBB, has been Performance Administrator with the City of Mesa since March 2021. Prior to this, she has 19 years of experience in the Healthcare industry in acute, ambulatory and laboratory medicine environments. In each of these environments, Jolene helped improve quality of care and service delivery outcomes while enhancing the employee experience in both operations and consulting roles including the Director of Patient Access and Specialty Services for a national health system and Anatomic Pathology Manager for a nation-wide based Laboratory. Jolene obtained her Bachelor's in Equine Science with a minor in Anatomy/Neurobiology from Colorado State University, and her MBA from Arizona State University W.P. Carey School of Business. She is also an ASQ Certified Six Sigma Black Belt and Malcolm Baldrige Examiner.

Jolene is passionate about bringing innovation, people and outcomes together. She believes achieving excellence is a journey anyone can be part of, and those who do partake have always had positive gains, some large and some small, that have made the efforts proven worthwhile.



#### **Sally Sadoff**

University of California, San Diego

Sally Sadoff holds the Rafael and Marina Pastor Chancellor's Rady School of Management Endowed Faculty Fellowship and is Associate Professor of Economics and Strategy at the University of California-San Diego Rady School of Management. Her research in applied microeconomics is focused on behavioral economics, experimental economics, labor, and human capital. Dr. Sadoff's work incorporates insights from behavioral economics with the aim of improving incentive design, educational achievement gaps, and physical and mental health. She has designed and implemented field experiments in partnership with government agencies, non-profits, companies and schools. Prior to her current position, she was a postdoctoral scholar at the University of Chicago and a visiting professor at the Ohio State University. She earned her Ph.D. and M.A. in Economics from the University of Chicago and her B.A. in Economics from Harvard University.

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#### Anisha Singh

The Busara Center for Behavioral Economics

Inequity is many things; it is also a behavioral problem. I'll never forget the day I spent hours looking for tested interventions to reduce the gap in women volunteering more than men at work, and all I could find was how to empower women to feel comfortable volunteering less. Well meaning interventions fail as they misplace the responsibility of behavior change on the individual or fail to account for women's lived experiences. I spend many days at Busara trying to shift this paradigm. I want to reimagine organizations as choice architects to disrupt the systemic and structural

barriers that perpetuate gender inequity in the workplace and use our decision labs to test feasible solutions. As the Director for Research and Innovation at Busara, I lead our portfolio of academic collaborations and experiments that focus on creating new knowledge around behavioral mechanisms and behavioral interventions in the Global South. I am currently a Practitioner-in-Residence at [MIT GOV/LAB](#) collating stories and learnings on running behavioral lab experiments for policy-making from around the world. Occasionally, I teach [Behavioral Experiments for International Development](#) at the University of Chicago. Weaving together years of research process learnings from working with teams across many developing countries, I set up our CREME team that focuses on i) [research on research](#), ii) [measurement and cross-cultural contextualization of behavioral science](#), iii) [ethical experimental research](#) and led the set up of a co-branded [Consumer Citizen Lab with Nudge Lebanon](#). Some of my writing focuses on [addressing these learnings](#). I have an MSc in Social Cognition from University College London, and a BSc in Economics from Singapore Management University.



#### Richard Thaler

University of Chicago

Richard H. Thaler is the 2017 recipient of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for his contributions to behavioral economics. Thaler studies behavioral economics and finance as well as the psychology of decision-making which lies in the gap between economics and psychology. He investigates the implications of relaxing the standard economic assumption that everyone in the economy is rational and selfish, instead entertaining the possibility that some of

the agents in the economy are sometimes human. Thaler is the co-author (with Cass R. Sunstein) of the global best seller *Nudge* (2008) in which the concepts of behavioral economics are used to tackle many of society's major problems. In 2015 he published *Misbehaving: The Making of Behavioral Economics*. He has authored or edited four other books: *Quasi-Rational Economics*, *The Winner's Curse: Paradoxes and Anomalies of Economic Life*, and *Advances in Behavioral Finance* (editor) Volumes I

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and II. He has published numerous articles in prominent journals such as the *American Economics Review*, the *Journal of Finance*, and the *Journal of Political Economy*.

Thaler is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a Fellow of the American Finance Association and the Econometrics Society, and in 2015 served as the President of the American Economic Association.

Before joining the University of Chicago faculty in 1995 Thaler taught at the University of Rochester and Cornell as well as visiting stints at The University of British Columbia, the Sloan School of Management at MIT, the Russell Sage Foundation and the Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences at Stanford.

Originally from New Jersey, Thaler attended Case Western Reserve University where he received a bachelor's degree in 1967. Soon after, he attended the University of Rochester where he received a master's degree in 1970 and a PhD in 1974. He joined the Chicago Booth faculty in 1995.



### David Yokum

Brown University

David Yokum, JD, PhD is Director of [The Policy Lab at Brown University](#), where he leads a wide portfolio of work creating scientific insights that improve public policy. He works with governments across the country, including particularly extensive engagements with Rhode Island, North Carolina, San Antonio, and about a dozen other cities, counties, and states.

He was previously the founding director of [The Lab @ DC](#) in the D.C. Mayor's Office and, before that, a founding member of the [White House's Social & Behavioral Sciences Team](#) and director of its scientific delivery unit housed at the U.S. General Services Administration [Office of Evaluation Sciences](#). The latter work was institutionalized in Presidential Executive Order 13707, "Using Behavioral Science Insights to Better Serve the American People."

David's work—from the world's largest field experiment of a police body-worn camera program, to building algorithms that predict the location of rats, to a Form-a-Palooza initiative systematically re-designing all government forms—has been published in diverse outlets (e.g. *Nature*, *Nature Human Behavior*, *PNAS*, *Health Affairs*, *Governing Magazine*), received widespread media coverage (front-page *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, NPR, etc.), and impacted communities across the country. Upwards of 100 field experiments have now been completed under The Policy Lab, The Lab @ DC, and the Office of Evaluation Sciences.

P.S. Check out his podcast, [30,000 Leagues](#) (thirtythousandleagues.com)!



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#### Joe Zhao

##### Mesa City Nudge Team



Joe Zhao is the Senior Performance Advisor with the City of Mesa, AZ. He co-founded the Nudge Mesa – City Behavioral Insight Team with Dr. Janet Woolum in Fall, 2020, who retired that year. Supported by the Executive Champions of the Mesa Nudge Team, Michael Kennington, Candace Cannistraro, and Jolene Pomeroy, the Mesa Nudge Team is one of the first city nudge teams in the nation that partner with the Behavioural Insights Team on capacity building and collaboration on citywide nudge projects. Since 2020, the Mesa Nudge Team has expanded its membership from 14 to

25 members, representing every public service department of the city, like Police, Fire, and Park. The Mesa Nudge Team work on cross-departmental, cross-functional projects utilizing the nudge concept and E.A.S.T framework.

Mr. Zhao is a dedicated local government professional with over a decade of experience in performance management, process improvement, management consulting, strategic planning, and policy research in local government. He has served in various roles in the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer of Richmond, VA, Mayor's Office of Kansas City, MO, State Deputy Comptroller's Office for New York City, etc. Mr. Zhao is Vice-Chair of Valley Benchmark Communities Group, a performance management consortium of the 15 largest cities in the Phoenix Metro area, and a Mesa Public Schools Equity Advisory Council member. He will be completing his doctoral studies in public policy and administration at Virginia Commonwealth University in 2022.