

NICHOLAS GRAFF
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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Economics, University of Kentucky, May 2023
M.S. Economics, University of Kentucky, December 2019
B.A. Economics, University of Kentucky, May 2018

Research Fields

Labor Economics, Economics of Entrepreneurship, Public Economics

Working Papers

“Necessity Versus Opportunity Entrepreneurship: Entry and Performance of Job-Losers and Moonlighters” – Job Market Paper

Abstract: Governments around the world and in the United States subsidize business creation for the unemployed. This paper contributes to the policy discussion on subsidizing necessity entrepreneurs – entrepreneurs who are “pushed” into self-employment due to job-loss or unemployment. Prior literature addressing this policy question often uses short panels with only two to three time periods, sometimes years apart. This paper uses four panels from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). The short time between interviews (4 months) and the relatively long panels (3-5 years) addresses the concern raised by previous work of misclassifying entrepreneurs who experience job transitions between interviews. Using the panel identifies almost two times as many necessity entrepreneurs compared to a simplified classification strategy. I conclude that necessity entrepreneurs start smaller businesses, and have similar firm survival to opportunity entrepreneurs. And while necessity entrepreneurs earn less than opportunity entrepreneurs, they replace a substantial portion of their pre-entry earnings.

“Explaining the Male-Female Earnings Gap in Self-Employment”

Abstract: While economics researchers have a good understanding of why the male-female earnings gap exists for employed workers, there is no clear explanation for the even larger earnings gap among self-employed men and women. Self-employed men earn \$3,599 per month on average - almost twice that of self-employed women’s monthly earnings, \$1,834. Some of this gap is due to self-employed men working 4 more hours per week on average. Small portions of the earnings gap can also be explained by differences in industry sorting and in business characteristics. Men are more likely to sort into higher earning industries, and male owned businesses are older and larger. Oaxaca-Blinder earnings decompositions yield unsatisfying results. Much of the earnings gap cannot be explained by differences in observables. This paper takes a new approach to the issue by investigating the role of capital, the interaction between capital investment and labor hours, and the role of sorting into self-employment. A simple theoretical model implies a gender earnings gap will occur if (1) women’s disutility from labor is

higher than men's, (2) women value non-pecuniary benefits of self-employment more than men do, (3) men receive more entrepreneurial mentorship, (4) women are more risk averse. I suppose these hypotheses with evidence from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), and with evidence from prior literature.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

University of Kentucky Department of Economics

Research Assistant to Dr. Chris Bollinger

Jan. 2020 - Dec. 2020

University of Kentucky Department of Economics

Research Assistant to Dr. Lala Ma

Summer 2017, Summer 2018, Summer 2019

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Kentucky Department of Economics

Lexington, KY

Courses taught As Lead Instructor:

Principles of Microeconomics (ECO 201): Fall 2022, Spring 2022, Summer 2020 (online)

Intermediate Microeconomics (ECO 401): Summer 2022, Summer 2021 (Online)

Teaching Assistant Positions:

Recitation Instructor Business Statistics ECO 391: Fall 2019, Fall 2021

Teaching Assistant to Dr. John Garen: Spring 2019

-Social Economic Organization (ECO 365)

Teaching Assistant to Dr. Gail Hoyt: Spring 2021, Spring 2019, Fall 2018

-Principles of Microeconomics (ECO 201)

Teaching Assistant to Dr. Lala Ma: Spring 2022, Fall 2021, Fall 2018, Spring 2018

-Environmental Economics (ECO 381)

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

- Graduate Assistant Stipend (2018 - Present)
 - Kentucky Heritage Scholarship (2014 - 2018)
 - Legacy Tuition Program (2014 - 2018)
 - Schnatter Institute/BB&T Program Scholarship for the Kentucky Junto (Fall 2017)
 - "Equality: Whether and Why It Matters" Discussion Colloquium Stipend Recipient
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SKILLS

- Computer Programming: Stata, Latex, Python, Excel
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Security Clearances: Special Sworn Status (SSS) U.S. Census Bureau

References

Christopher Bollinger (Chair)

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Kenneth Troske

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Gail Hoyt

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