

Institut Mines-Télécom Business School
Law, Economics and Finance Department

Dear members of the recruitment committee,

I am an applied micro economist with an interest in political economy studying the causes and effects of protests with a specific focus on social media. I use rich data sources and new data analysis techniques to understand the role of social media in the creation, broadening and success of modern protests, particularly those involving or affecting disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

In my job market paper, entitled “*Can chants in the street change politics’ tune? Evidence from the 15M movement in Spain*”, I study how the level of attendance at simultaneous marches in almost 90 cities organized by the 15M (the Spanish Occupy movement) impacted electoral behavior and political attitudes in the following decade. Using regional variation in weather shocks as an instrumental variable for the level of attendance at simultaneous marches, I find that cities with higher attendance are more concerned about corruption and vote more for left wing and anti-corruption parties and less for far-right parties. Using novel data from Twitter, I document a higher uptake of social media platforms after an offline protest and a persistent difference in online activity in cities with higher attendance. Using survey data, I also show a higher electoral effect for people that have a social media account. Overall, my paper shows that street protests can have long-lasting effects on political concerns and electoral choices, explained, in part, by the creation of a persistent online social network.

In my other three working papers: i) I study the 2020 Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests and show that exposure to COVID-19 increases the likelihood of observing a BLM protest, especially in more affluent counties in suburban areas with a higher share of whites, and that this increase can be in part explained by a higher exposure to social media; ii) I examine the local characteristics affecting the success of BLM protests in the 2014-2018 period after a national trigger, identifying that inequality encourage protests, poverty discourages them, and that the possibility of formal participation decreases protest behavior; iii) I study the PEGIDA anti-migration protests in Germany and find results suggesting they increase the probability of hate crime occurring in the same municipality in the following week.

I plan to continue this line of research, expanding it in several ways. First, I plan to take advantage of new developments in data analysis tools to understand how media and social media use text and images to organize, report and create debate around protests and other social and economic phenomena. I want to pay specific attention to the role of images in communication given the increasing number of social platforms that are image based and the increasing importance of images in all spheres of traditional and social media. Additionally, the very recent developments on image analysis brings within reach large sets of data, now accessible in a systematic fashion, and pave the way for new stimulating lines of research. Second, I want to deepen the analysis of the role of online and offline networks in society.

I am convinced that interdisciplinarity is crucial to conduct research about problems deeply rooted in the real world. To that end, I have collaborated and published with computer science researchers to evaluate the impact of different changes in the organization of software development aiming for more inclusive and effective open source development. One of these collaborations has already generated published results. I plan to pursue these collaborations, notably with Theo Zimmerman and Stefano Zacchiroli (both affiliated to the software engineering department of Telecom Paris) in the context of the project “What Causes the Lack of Diversity in Open Source?” that has recently won the Google Award for Inclusion Research.

I have an extensive experience of teaching different courses, both in french and english, to diverse student populations in multiple institutions (at Centrale Paris, Sciences Po Paris, Sorbonne University and Institut des Hautes Études en Amérique Latine) both at graduate and undergraduate levels. Notably, I taught two courses on quantitative methods, one of those that I created from scratch, and guided students for their master thesis. I enjoy teaching, interacting with students and I strive to make my classroom an inclusive environment where everybody can think freely and thrive.

I will be delighted to work, teach and continue learning at Institut Mines-Télécom Business School. I am looking forward to collaborating with your excellent faculty members. Besides all members of IDEAL, I will appreciate to collaborate with other members of IMT like Marie Haikel-Elsabeh who also works on the role of social media on society.

Yours faithfully,

Annalí Casanueva Artís
Paris School of Economics