

Laura Caron

Department of Economics
Columbia University
New York, NY 10027

lkc2142@columbia.edu
laurakcaron.github.io

Placement Chairs

Mark Dean (mark.dean@columbia.edu) and Martín Uribe (mu2166@columbia.edu)

Placement Administrators

Jonathan Mendoza (jam2546@columbia.edu) and Amy Devine (aed2152@columbia.edu)

EDUCATION

Columbia University, PhD in Economics (Aug 2020 – May 2026, expected)

Fields: Applied microeconomics (labor and education) and econometrics

Columbia University, MPhil in Economics (May 2023)

Columbia University, MA in Economics (May 2022)

Georgetown University, BSFS in International Political Economy with a minor in Mathematics (Aug 2016- May 2020), *summa cum laude*

School of Foreign Service

JOB MARKET PAPER

The Short- and Long-Term Impacts of Expanding Public Education for Disabled Students.

Draft available [here](#).

Between 1949 and 1980, every U.S. state mandated public schools to provide educational services for disabled students. This is one of the largest education reforms in U.S. history, but little is known about its impacts. Given scarce data in this period, I compile survey and administrative datasets and set up a difference-in-difference design using variation in the mandates' timing. I show that the mandates increased both services for disabled students and preschool enrollments. In adulthood, disabled individuals below school age at a mandate's implementation became about 20% less likely to have no education, attained up to 0.23 more years of education, and were more likely to have worked. Although this policy could have taken away resources from non-disabled students, in fact, education and employment also increased for non-disabled individuals. These effects align with evidence that the mandates increased spending per student by up to 15%. Families were also impacted: the mandates increased employment among mothers of disabled children and the probability that disabled individuals became household heads. Over the long term, the mandates paid for themselves by generating government revenues in excess of their cost. These results provide new evidence on the large, broad impacts of expanding access to education for disabled students.

WORKING PAPERS AND WORKS IN PROGRESS

Triple Difference Designs with Heterogeneous Treatment Effects. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2502.19620* (2025). <https://arxiv.org/abs/2502.19620>. Revise and resubmit at *Journal of Econometrics*.

Triple difference designs have become increasingly popular in empirical economics. The advantage of a triple difference design is that, within a treatment group, it allows for another subgroup of the population—potentially less impacted by the treatment—to serve as a control for the subgroup of interest. While literature on difference-in-differences has discussed heterogeneity in treatment effects between treated and control groups or over time, little attention has been given to the implications of heterogeneity in treatment effects between subgroups. In this paper, I show that the parameter identified under the usual triple difference assumptions does not allow for causal interpretation of differences between subgroups when subgroups may differ in their underlying (unobserved) treatment effects. I propose a new parameter of interest, the causal difference in average treatment effects on the treated, which makes causal comparisons between subgroups. I discuss assumptions for identification and derive the semiparametric efficiency bounds for this parameter. I then propose doubly-robust, efficient estimators for this parameter. I use a simulation study to highlight the desirable finite-sample properties of these estimators, as well as to show the difference between this parameter and the usual triple difference parameter of interest. An empirical application shows the importance of considering treatment effect heterogeneity in practical applications.

Switching Strategies? Peer Impacts of Moving Disabled Students to General Education Classrooms (with Jesper Eriksen and Jeppe Johansen). Draft available [here](#).

Prior work has shown that placing disabled students in classrooms with non-disabled peers (“mainstreaming”) can have negative impacts on these peers, but has not fully considered the role of student mobility in understanding these impacts. Using Danish administrative data and a difference-in-difference design, we show that the arrival of a mainstreamed student in a classroom makes peers 11% more likely to switch schools in a given year. Because school switching is selective by socio-economic background and choice of public versus private schools, this may increase socio-economic segregation. We isolate the direct impacts of the arrival of a mainstreamed student from the indirect impacts of school switching by studying a sizeable — although potentially selected — subgroup of students who never change schools. For this subgroup, we find little evidence that the arrival of a mainstreamed student causes negative effects on attendance, test scores, or social tensions in the class. In contrast, students who do change schools experience negative impacts, which may be due to direct effects from the arrival of a mainstreamed student or the indirect disruption caused by switching schools. Research and policy on the inclusion of disabled students in classrooms must account for the role of student mobility in shaping outcomes.

Employer Preferences and Job-Seeker Beliefs: Experimental Evidence from the Post-College Job Search Process (with Tarikua Erda). In progress. Pre-registered in the AEA RCT Registry.

Job seekers often try to anticipate employers' preferences for job applicants, but we know little about how well they understand these preferences. We partner with a large, mid-tier public university in the Southeastern U.S. to conduct incentivized, pre-registered experiments on both employers and job-seeking students to examine: (1) how employers evaluate candidate characteristics, (2) whether (and which) students accurately understand employer preferences, and (3) how those student beliefs relate to their job search outcomes. We find that employers value GPA and previous work experience, and we add novel systematic evidence that employers rely on information about extracurricular activities, primarily to judge candidates' non-cognitive skills. Students, however, tend to misunderstand employer preferences, generally overestimating the role of professional internships and academics and underestimating the role of extracurriculars and the number of work experiences. Incorrect beliefs are linked to lower wage offers, suggesting that poor information quality is associated with worse job outcomes. This work introduces new methodological approaches to provide evidence on information quality among job seekers, with important implications for the design of interventions to reduce information frictions in the job search process.

Women, Men, and Polya Urns. Underrepresentation at Equal Talent in the Absence of Discrimination (with Alessandra Casella and Victoria Mooers). In progress.

In a world where the majority and the minority group have equal distributions of talent, where candidates are objectively and accurately evaluated, and no discrimination occurs, the underrepresentation of the minority group in prestigious positions is nonetheless highly sticky. If the sample of candidates from the minority group is numerically smaller, at equal distribution of talent, the most qualified candidate is more likely to belong to the majority sample, mirroring its larger numerical size. If future samples of candidates respond to the realized selection in the expected direction—increasing if the selection came from the sample, decreasing or increasing less if it did not—the higher probability of success in the majority sample will persist. We capture this process with a well-known statistical model: the Polya urn. The richness of existing results and the streamlined model allow us to study and compare different policy interventions. Two robust results are that temporary affirmative action interventions have long-term equalizing effects, and that any decline in the quality of selected candidates is self-correcting, even while the intervention lasts. A simple app (<https://caron.shinyapps.io/Women-Men-Polya-Urns/>) allows readers to run their own experiments.

Households in Transit: COVID-19 and the Changing Measurement of Welfare (with Erwin Tiongson). *IZA Discussion Paper No. 15670* (2022). <https://docs.iza.org/dp15670.pdf>.

The COVID-19 pandemic placed new constraints and prices on commuting to work around the world. However, traditional methods of measuring household welfare (and, accordingly, poverty and inequality) based on expenditures or consumption have not taken into consideration the implications of these changes. We propose a new method to impute transportation cost equivalents for household consumption or expenditure aggregates. First, we outline the theory

showing significant mismeasurement of welfare for households who are able to shift into remote work during the pandemic. We show that taking transportation costs into account has important implications for evaluating the impacts of the pandemic.

Jobs Interventions for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (with Kirsten Schuettler).

Jobs Working Paper; No. 47. World Bank, Washington, DC. World Bank (2020).

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33953>.

Refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) often struggle to integrate into the labor market. This literature review brings together two strands of research to inform the design of successful job interventions in this context: the evidence on how forced displacement impacts those forcibly displaced in their economic lives and the existing knowledge on jobs interventions for refugees and IDPs.

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Empty Digital Wallets: New Technologies and Old Inequalities. *Oxford Open Economics* 1 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1093/ooec/odac001>.

Disability, Employment and Wages: Evidence from Indonesia. *International Journal of Manpower* 42 (5): 866–88 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJM-01-2020-0022>.

Migration and Mental Health in Mexico: Domestic Migrants, Return U.S. Migrants, and Non-Migrants. (with Katherine M. Donato and Erin Hamilton). *Front. Psychiatry* 10:970. (2020) <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00970>.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Dean's Fellow, Columbia University, 2020-2026

NSF Graduate Research Fellow, 2022-2026

Dissertation Fellowship, Columbia University Department of Economics, 2025-2026

Reubens Travel and Research Fellowship, Columbia University, 2024-2025

Anna J. Schwartz Fellowship for best prospectus defense in the Columbia University Department of Economics in the 2023-2024 academic year

Angell Fellowship, Columbia University, for 2023-2034 academic year

Runner up for Wueller Fellowship for best pre-dissertation proposal in the Columbia University Department of Economics in the 2023-2024 academic year

Vickrey Award for best third year paper in the Columbia University Department of Economics in the 2022-2023 academic year

Dean's Medal, Georgetown University, 2020

Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society

Alpha Sigma Nu National Honor Society

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Columbia University, Department of Economics

Instructor of Record

Labor Economics. Evaluation 4.5/5. Summer 2024.

Teaching Assistantships

PhD Econometrics (with Professor Jushan Bai and Professor Simon Lee). Evaluation 4.8/5.
Spring 2024.

Political Economy (with Professor Alessandra Casella). Evaluation 4.8/5. Fall 2023.

Intermediate Microeconomics (with Professor Ingmar Nyman). Evaluation 4.8/5. Spring 2022.

Political Economy (with Professor Alessandra Casella). Evaluation 4.5/5. Fall 2021.

Awards

Wueller Award for Best TA in Undergraduate Core Courses for the 2021-2022 academic year

Wueller Award for Best TA in PhD Courses for the 2023-2024 academic year

Georgetown University, Department of Economics

Teaching Assistantships

Macroeconomics (with Professor Carol Rogers), Georgetown University Department of Economics. Evaluation 4.1/5. Spring 2017.

RESEARCH AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant/Short-Term Consultant (working with Victor Sulla and Erwin Tiongson)
World Bank Social Protection Global Practice Group, Europe and Central Asia, March 2023 – October 2023.

Research Assistant/Short-Term Consultant

World Bank World Development Report 2023, February 2022 – May 2023.

Research Assistant (working with Alessandra Casella)

Columbia University Department of Economics, May 2021 – August 2021.

Research Assistant/Short-Term Temporary (working with Victor Sulla and Erwin Tiongson)
World Bank Poverty & Equity Global Practice Group, Africa, August 2019 – August 2020.

Research Assistant/Short-Term Temporary (working with Xubei Luo and Erwin Tiongson)

World Bank Poverty & Equity Global Practice Group, East Asia, April 2019 – June 2020.

Research Assistant (working with Katharine Donato)

Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University, June 2019 – October 2020.

Carroll Round Research Scholar (working with Shareen Joshi and S. Anukriti)

Georgetown University, June 2019 – December 2019.

Independent Consultant (working with Tomoko Harigaya)

Precision Development (formerly Precision Agriculture for Development), Boston, MA,

Research Intern June 2018 – August 2018, Independent Consultant August 2018 – May 2019.

MSFS Research Scholar (working with Erwin Tiongson)

Master of Science in Foreign Service Program at Georgetown University, September 2017 – June 2019.

Research Assistant (working with Erik Voeten)

Georgetown University, June 2018 – August 2018.

Constituent Affairs Intern

Office of State Senator Jason Lewis, May 2017 - August 2017.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

President, Georgetown University Astronomical Society

December 2016 – May 2020.

PRESENTATIONS

2025 American University

2024 APPAM Fall Research Conference, Harvard University Graduate Workshop in Economic History

2022 5th IZA Labor Statistics Workshop: The Measurement of Incomes, Living Costs and Standards of Living, Korean Development Institute (KDI) School Impact Evaluation Conference, Better than Cash Alliance

2019 Carroll Round Conference, Georgetown University Undergraduate Research Colloquium

Other presentations

The Legacy of the Georgetown College Observatory (D.C.) (with Grace Maglieri and Patrick Seitzer), American Astronomical Society, AAS Meeting #231 (2018)
<http://adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2018AAS...23112602C>.

Lead in the Water: Disclosing Lead Service Lines (with Cathy Bailey, Tom Neltner, and Doug Farquhar) presented for the National Conference of State Legislatures (2017).

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/environment-and-natural-resources/lead-in-the-water-disclosing-lead-service-lines.aspx>.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL REPORTS

Reimbursable Advisory Services Agreement on Modernizing the Disability Assessment System in Romania. World Bank (2023),

<https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099030424143695132/p1711571a8038c0a41beb91eb8b2540e762>

World Development Report 2023: Migrants, Refugees, and Societies. World Bank (2023),

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2023>

Inequality in Southern Africa: An Assessment of the Southern African Customs Union.

Victor Sulla, Precious Zikhali, Pablo Facundo Cuevas (2022). World Bank.

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099125303072236903/P1649270c02a1f06b0a3ae02e57eadd7a82>

Towards Safer and More Productive Migration for South Asia. Ahmed, S., Bossavie, L. L.

Y., Bartl, E. M., Caron, L. K., Khadka, U., Khan, M., ... & Wang, H (2020). World Bank.

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33559>.

The Kingdom of Eswatini Toward Equal Opportunity: Accelerating Inclusion and Poverty Reduction. Systematic Country Diagnostic. World Bank (2020).

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/34970>

The Middle Class in the Philippines: An Exploration of the Conditions for Upward Mobility. World Bank (2020). <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/34099>

Namibia Systematic Country Diagnostic. World Bank (2020).

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/35434>

Eswatini - Economic Recovery Development Policy Loan Project (2020). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.

<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/366911606100452341/Eswatini-Economic-Recovery-Development-Policy-Loan-Project>

COMMENTARY & BLOG POSTS

Digital banking is the in-thing – but it excludes many users in Tanzania and Senegal. *The Conversation*. April 17, 2022. <https://theconversation.com/digital-banking-is-the-in-thing-but-it-excludes-many-users-in-tanzania-and-senegal-180092>

Disability and labour markets in Indonesia. *Devpolicy*. November 3, 2021.

<https://devpolicy.org/disability-and-labour-markets-in-indonesia-20211102/>

The Pandemic Drove Savings Rates Sky-High. They Still Haven't Fallen to Earth (with Erwin Tiongson). *Barron's*. June 23, 2021. <https://www.barrons.com/articles/the-pandemic-changed-how-we-save-spelling-trouble-for-the-recovery-51624476916>

The pandemic poverty penalty: how COVID-19 complicates our measure of household well-being (with Erwin Tiongan). *London School of Economics COVID-19 Blog*. June 15, 2021. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/covid19/2021/06/15/the-pandemic-poverty-penalty-how-covid-19-complicates-our-measure-of-household-well-being/>

China, India lead in Asia but new growth sources will shake up the global economy (with Erwin Tiongan). *South China Morning Post*. November 12, 2020.

<https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3109263/china-india-lead-asia-new-growth-sources-will-shake-global-economy>

Immigrants are still sending lots of money home despite the coronavirus job losses – for now (with Erwin Tiongan). *The Conversation*. October 21, 2020.

<https://theconversation.com/immigrants-are-still-sending-lots-of-money-home-despite-the-coronavirus-job-losses-for-now-148387>

How Can Digital Finance Support Agriculture? Using Alternative Data Sources to Support Consumer Protection. *Responsible Finance Forum* (blog). September 30, 2019.

<https://responsiblefinanceforum.org/can-digital-finance-support-agriculture-using-alternative-data-sources-support-consumer-protection/>

Fintechs and Big Data: Opportunities, Risks, and Approaches to Consumer Data Protection in Kenya and East Africa. *Responsible Finance Forum* (blog). February 26, 2019.

<https://responsiblefinanceforum.org/fintechs-big-data-opportunities-risks-approaches-consumer-data-protection-data-protection-kenya-east-africa/>.

Leveraging Digital Presence for Consumer Relationships (with Isabelle Smith). *Responsible Finance Forum* (blog). January 31, 2019. <https://responsiblefinanceforum.org/leveraging-digital-presence-consumer-relationships/>.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

The Heyden Observatory at Georgetown University. Historical Astronomy Division (HAD) News: The Newsletter of the Historical Astronomy Division of the American Astronomical Society. October 2018.

SERVICE & MENTORING

Mentor to high school student in economics. June 2025 – present.

Mentor, Graduate Applications International Network (GAIN). May 2024 – present.

Mentor to Master's students, Women in Economics Initiative. November 2022 – present.

Mentor to PhD first-years, Association of Graduate Economics Students at Columbia. September 2021 – present.

Diversity representative, Columbia University Economics Department Diversity Initiative. September 2022 – May 2025.

Program organizer, Columbia University Economics Department Diversity Initiative's Undergraduate Mentoring Program. September 2021 – May 2023.

Mentor to undergraduates, Columbia University Economics Department Diversity Initiative's Undergraduate Mentoring Program. January 2021 – May 2024.

Mentor to undergraduates, Women in Science at Columbia Mentoring Program. September 2020 – May 2023.

REFERENCES

Alessandra Casella

Professor of Economics and
Professor of Political Science
Columbia University
ac186@columbia.edu

Simon Lee

Professor of Economics
Columbia University
sl3841@columbia.edu

Ebonya Washington

Laurans A. and Arlene Mendelson
Professor of Economics and
Professor of International and
Public Affairs
Columbia University
ebonya.washington@columbia.edu