

Modibo Camara

Northwestern Economics

Placement Director: Professor Alessandro Pavan 847-491-8266 alepavan@northwestern.edu
Placement Administrator: Alison Stoute 847-491-5694 econjobmarket@northwestern.edu

Contact Information	Department of Economics Northwestern University 2211 Campus Drive Evanston, IL 60208	Mobile: 202-415-2751 mcamara@u.northwestern.edu https://mkcamara.github.io/ Citizenship: United States, Germany
Fields	Research: Microeconomic Theory, Economics & Computation Teaching: Microeconomics, Econometrics	
Education	Ph.D., Economics, Northwestern University Dissertation: Complexities in Economic Theory Committee: Eddie Dekel (Chair), Jason Hartline (Chair), Marciano Siniscalchi, Jeffrey Ely M.A., Economics, Northwestern University B.A., Mathematics & Economics, University of Pennsylvania	(anticipated) 2022 2018 2016
Fellowships & Awards	Distinguished TA Award Dissertation University Fellowship, Northwestern University	2021-22 2021-22
Teaching Experience	Teaching Assistant, Northwestern University Econometrics (graduate), Econometrics (undergrad), Microeconomics (undergrad)	2017-2021
Research Experience	Research Intern, Nicole Immorlica, Microsoft Research Research Assistant, Eddie Dekel, Northwestern University Project Intern, Yian Liu, Federal Reserve Board of Governors Intern, Esen Onur, Commodity Futures Trading Commission Research Assistant, Susan Wachter, University of Pennsylvania	2020 2019 2015 2014 2013-14
Conferences	Cornell ORIE (invited) Economics and Computation (invited) Risk, Uncertainty, and Decision (RUD) Decision: Theory, Experiments, and Applications (D-TEA) North American Summer Meeting of the Econometric Society Africa Meeting of the Econometric Society European Summer Meeting of the Econometric Society World Congress of the Game Theory Society (GAMES) Foundations of Computer Science (FOCS) Econometric Society Winter Meeting (Europe) Young Economists Symposium (YES) Economics Graduate Student Conference (EGSC) Midwest Theory Day	2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2021 2020 2020 2020 2020 2018
Refereeing	American Economic Review, Journal of Mathematical Economics	

Job Market Paper**“Computationally Tractable Choice”**

Abstract: This paper incorporates time constraints into decision theory, via computational complexity theory. I use the resulting framework to better understand common behavioral heuristics known as choice bracketing. My main result shows that a time-constrained agent who satisfies the expected utility axioms must have a Hadwiger separable utility function. This separability condition is a relaxation of additive separability that allows for some complementarities and substitutions but limits their frequency. One implication of this result is that a time-constrained agent may be better off violating the expected utility axioms. This can occur when the agent wants to maximize the expected value of a utility function that is not Hadwiger separable.

Other papers**“Mechanisms for a No-Regret Agent: Beyond the Common Prior” (with J. Hartline, A. Johnsen)**

Abstract: A rich class of economic problems can be understood as games of incomplete information played by a policymaker who commits to a policy and an agent who responds. Typically, optimal policies depend on both the policymaker and the agent’s prior knowledge about the environment. To get around this, researchers often (a) assume that both the policymaker and the agent have substantial prior knowledge, or (b) assume no knowledge and optimize against the worst-case. We propose online learning as a way to combine the superior performance of (a) with the robustness of (b). We study a repeated interaction where both the policymaker and the agent may learn about the environment over time. We develop simple calibrated policies that ensure bounded regret, relative to the best-in-hindsight static policy. Our guarantees are prior-free and hold even in highly non-stationary environments. They require novel behavioral assumptions that capture concepts like “rationality” or “unpredictability” without relying on beliefs.

“Mechanism Design with Common Data”

Abstract: In many settings, understanding an agent’s beliefs can be the difference between a successful policy and one that fails dramatically. Unfortunately, in many instances, the rich behavioral or survey data needed to identify an agent’s beliefs may not be available. In this paper, I propose a modeling assumption that bypasses this issue, and show that it can highlight important policy trade-offs not captured by existing models. The core idea is straightforward: if the available data convincingly demonstrates some fact about the world, the agent should believe that fact. Otherwise, her beliefs are left unspecified. I develop this approach in the context of incomplete-information games where a policymaker commits to a policy, an agent responds, and both have access to a public dataset. It turns out that policies that are too complex may be suboptimal because they lead to unpredictable behavior. To balance the benefits of policy complexity with its costs, I develop a method called strategic regularization and motivate it through both theoretical guarantees and illustrative examples.

Languages

English (fluent), German (native), Spanish (intermediate)

References

Professor Eddie Dekel
Department of Economics
Northwestern University
2211 Campus Drive
Evanston, IL 60208
847.491.4414
dekel@northwestern.edu

Professor Marciano Siniscalchi
Department of Economics
Northwestern University
2211 Campus Drive
Evanston, IL 60208
847.491.5398
marciano@northwestern.edu

Professor Jason Hartline
Department of Computer Science
Northwestern University
2233 Tech Drive
Evanston, IL 60208
847.467.0280
hartline@northwestern.edu

Professor Jeffrey Ely
Department of Economics
Northwestern University
2211 Campus Drive
Evanston, IL 60208
847.491.8208
jeffely@northwestern.edu