Modibo Camara

Northwestern Economics

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Fields

Research: Microeconomic Theory, Economics & Computation

Teaching: Microeconomics, Econometrics

Education

Ph.D., Economics, Northwestern University	(anticipated) 2022

Dissertation: Complexities in Economic Theory
Committee: Eddie Dekel (Chair), Jason Hartline (Chair), Marciano Siniscalchi, Jeffrey Ely

M.A., Economics, Northwestern University	2018
B.A., Mathematics & Economics, University of Pennsylvania	2016

Fellowships & Awards

Distinguished TA Award	2021-22
Dissertation University Fellowship, Northwestern University	2021-22

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant, Northwestern University	2017-2021

Econometrics (graduate), Econometrics (undergrad), Microeconomics (undergrad)

Research Experience

Research Intern, Nicole Immorlica, Microsoft Research	2020
Research Assistant, Eddie Dekel, Northwestern University	2019
Project Intern, Yian Liu, Federal Reserve Board of Governors	2015
Intern, Esen Onur, Commodity Futures Trading Commission	2014
Research Assistant, Susan Wachter, University of Pennsylvania	2013-14

Conferences

European Winter Meeting of the Econometric Society	2021
Cornell ORIE (invited)	2021
Economics and Computation (invited)	2021
Transatlantic Theory Workshop	2021
Risk, Uncertainty, and Decision (RUD)	2021
Decision: Theory, Experiments, and Applications (D-TEA)	2021
North American Summer Meeting of the Econometric Society	2021
Africa Meeting of the Econometric Society	2021
European Summer Meeting of the Econometric Society	2021
World Congress of the Game Theory Society (GAMES)	2021
Foundations of Computer Science (FOCS)	2020
European Winter Meeting of the Econometric Society	2020
Young Economists Symposium (YES)	2020
Economics Graduate Student Conference (EGSC)	2020
Midwest Theory Day	2018

Refereeing	American Economic Review, Journal of Mathematical Economics, The Web Conference

Job Market Paper **"Computationally Tractable Choice"**

Abstract: I incorporate computational constraints into decision theory in order to capture how cognitive limitations affect behavior. I impose an axiom of computational tractability that rules out behaviors that are thought to be fundamentally hard. I use this framework to better understand common behavioral heuristics: if choices are tractable and consistent with the expected utility axioms, then they are observationally equivalent to forms of choice bracketing. Then I show that a computationally-constrained decisionmaker can be objectively better off if she is willing to use heuristics that would not appear rational to an outside observer.

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

Abstract: We study repeated games of incomplete information between a policymaker with commitment power and a single agent. We propose policies that adapt to historical data over time, assuming the agent does the same, without making any assumptions about the data-generating process. They are competitive with optimal static policies that rely on much stronger assumptions, like common prior beliefs. We conclude that robust solution concepts in mechanism design may be too pessimistic if they do not account for the possibility of learning over time.

"Mechanism Design with a Common Dataset"

Abstract: I propose a new approach to mechanism design: rather than assume a common prior belief, assume access to a common dataset. I restrict attention to incomplete information games where a designer commits to a policy and a single agent responds. I proposed a penalized policy that performs well under weak assumptions on how the agent learns from data. Policies that are too complex, in a precise sense, are penalized because they lead to unpredictable responses by the agent. This approach leads to new insights in models of vaccine distribution, prescription drug approval, performance pay, and product bundling.

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

References

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