VICTORIA MOOERS

October 21, 2024

Department of Economics
Columbia University
New York, NY 10027

Phone: +1 (405) 315-7297
Email: vrm2120@columbia.edu
Web: https://vmooers.github.io/

PLACEMENT COMMITTEE

Chairs: Sandra Black (sblack@columbia.edu); Mark Dean (md3405@columbia.edu)
Administrators: Amy Devine (aed2152@columbia.edu); Rosa Lourentzatos (rcl2109@columbia.edu)

EDUCATION

2025 (expected)	Ph.D.	Economics	Columbia University
2022	M.Phil.	Economics	Columbia University
2021	M.A.	Economics	Columbia University
2016	B.A.	Economics, Public Policy (with honors)	University of Chicago

FIELDS OF SPECIALIZATION

Primary: Applied Microeconomics, Political Economy
Secondary: Experimental Economics, Public Economics

JOB MARKET PAPER

Social Networks and Voter Information

Abstract: Informed voters are essential for government accountability, and social networks are an important avenue through which voters acquire political information. However, U.S. congressional districts do not need to align with social networks, potentially impacting how easily voters learn about their representatives. I study whether the alignment between district boundaries and social networks affects voter knowledge and turnout in congressional elections. Using Facebook's Social Connectedness Index and an event study design, I find that an increase in the share of friends living in the same district increases voters' knowledge about their representative. For example, a 10-percentage point (one standard deviation) increase in this share raises the probability that a voter knows their representative's party by 3.3 percentage points, a 5% increase over the mean. Additionally, a higher share of friends in the same district decreases voter abstention, and shifts campaign contributions towards in-district candidates. I use a model of information diffusion to simulate the share of informed voters under counterfactual district maps, creating a framework to evaluate the informational effects of proposed maps. These findings suggest that aligning political boundaries with social networks can enhance democratic engagement.

PUBLICATIONS

The Use and Misuse of Income Data and Extreme Poverty in the United States, with Bruce D. Meyer, Derek Wu, and Carla Medalia. *Journal of Labor Economics* 39:S1, S5-S58 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1086/711227

Abstract: Recent research suggests that the share of US households living on less than \$2/person/day is high and rising. We reexamine such extreme poverty by linking SIPP and CPS data to administrative tax and program data. We find that more than 90% of those reported to be in extreme poverty are not, once we include in-kind transfers, replace survey reports of earnings and transfer receipt with administrative records, and account for ownership of substantial assets. More than half of all misclassified households have incomes from the administrative data above the poverty line, and many have middle-class measures of material well-being.

WORKING PAPERS

Liquid Democracy. Two Experiments on Delegation in Voting, with Joseph Campbell, Alessandra Casella, Lucas de Lara, and Dilip Ravindran. https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2212.09715

Abstract: Proponents of participatory democracy praise Liquid Democracy: decisions are taken by referendum, but voters delegate their votes freely. When better informed voters are present, delegation can increase the probability of a correct decision. However, delegation must be used sparely because it reduces the information aggregated through voting. In two different experiments, we find that delegation underperforms both universal majority voting and the simpler option of abstention. In a tightly controlled lab experiment where the subjects' precision of information is conveyed in precise mathematical terms and very salient, the result is due to overdelegation. In a perceptual task run online where the precision of information is not known precisely, delegation remains very high and again underperforms both majority voting and abstention. In addition, subjects substantially overestimate the precision of the better-informed voters, underlining that Liquid Democracy is fragile to multiple sources of noise. The paper makes an innovative methodological contribution by combining two very different experimental procedures: the study of voting rules would benefit from complementing controlled experiments with known precision of information with tests under ambiguity, a realistic assumption in many voting situations.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Women, Men, and Pólya Urns: Underrepresentation at Equal Talent in the Absence of Discrimination, with Laura Caron and Alessandra Casella.

Abstract: 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. A simple app (https://caron.shinyapps.io/Women-Men-Polya-Urns/) allows readers to run their own experiments. 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.

RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE

Lab Manager, Columbia Experimental Laboratory for Social Sciences	Jan 2023 – Dec 2023
Research Assistant for Alessandra Casella, Columbia University	Jul 2022 – May 2023
Research Assistant for Joseph Stiglitz, Columbia University	Jun 2020 – Dec 2022
Pre-Doctoral Fellowship with Bruce D. Meyer, UChicago Harris School of Public Policy (based at U.S. Census Bureau Headquarters)	Jan 2018 – Jun 2019

Analyst, Compass Lexecon, Antitrust and Competition Practice in Washington, DC   Aug 2016 – Dec 2017
Research Assistant for Thomas Covert, Energy Policy Institute at UChicago   Jun 2015 – Jun 2016
Research Assistant for Glen Weyl & James Evans, Computation Institute at UChicago   May 2014 – Dec 2014

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Columbia University, Department of Economics
Teaching Assistant
Undergraduate level
  Public Economics (Instructor: Ceyhun Elgin) *Rating: 4.19/5.00*   Spring 2021
  Intermediate Microeconomics (Instructor: Wouter Vergote) *Rating: 4.50/5.00*   Fall 2020

AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

2024	Dissertation Fellowship, Columbia University
2023	Lewis A. Sanders Endowed Fellowship in Economics, Columbia University (for a PhD student in the department who demonstrates the potential to make important contributions to the field of economics)
2023	Wueller Pre-Dissertation Award: runner-up for best fourth-year proposal, Columbia University
2022	Vickrey Prize: runner-up for best third-year paper, Columbia University
2021-22	Trudy and Paul Woodruff Fellowship, Columbia University
2019-24	Economics Department Fellowship, Columbia University
2019-20	Provost Diversity Fellowship, Columbia University
2019-20	Dean's Fellowship, Columbia University
2016	David L. Fulton Prize (for orchestral excellence), University of Chicago
2015	Careers in Public Policy and Service Scholar, University of Chicago
2013-16	Klowden Scholarship (for distinction in extracurricular activities), University of Chicago
2012-16	Dean's List, University of Chicago
2012-16	National Merit Scholarship, University of Chicago

GRANTS

2024	Provost Diversity Fellows Small Grants Program ($1,500)
2024	Program for Economic Research (PER) Research Summer Fellow ($3,500)
2023	Program for Economic Research (PER) Research Summer Fellow ($4,000)
2022	Program for Economic Research (PER) Research Summer Fellow ($2,000)
2022	PER Award for Field or Experimental Research ($3,500)
2021	PER Award for Field or Experimental Research ($2,000)
2021	Program for Economic Research (PER) Research Summer Fellow ($2,000)
2021	Columbia Experimental Laboratory for Social Sciences (CELSS) Grant for Graduate Student Projects ($1,000)
2021	Micro Theory Initiative (MTI) Summer Funding ($1,000)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2024	Economics Graduate Student Conference, Washington University in St. Louis
2023	Student Workshop on Experimental Economics Techniques (SWEET), New York University
2022	Women in Economic Theory Student Conference, University of Chicago

SUMMER SCHOOLS & WORKSHOPS ATTENDED

2024   WEAI Graduate Student Workshop
2023   NBER Behavioral Public Economics Bootcamp
2022   Caltech CTESS Summer School on Theory Driven Experiments
2020   Virtual Berkeley Summer School in Environmental and Energy Economics

DEPARTMENT SERVICE

2023   Student Workshop on Experimental Economics Techniques (SWEET), conference organizer
2022-23   Applied Microeconomic Methods Colloquium Organizer
2020-24   Undergraduate Mentoring Program, founder and organizer; mentor 2022-2024
2020-22   Association of Graduate Economics Students (AGES) Graduate Mentoring Program mentor
2020-21   Departmental Diversity Committee Graduate Student Liaison

REFERENCES

Andrea Prat
Professor of Economics & Business
Columbia University
+1 (212) 854-0224
andrea.prat@columbia.edu

Alessandra Casella
Professor of Economics & Political Science
Columbia University
+1 (212) 854-2459
ac186@columbia.edu

Suresh Naidu
Professor of Economics & International and Public Affairs
Columbia University
+1 (212) 854-0027
sn2430@columbia.edu