COLUMBIA | ISERP

Institute for Social and Economic
Research and Policy

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022

CONTENTS

ISERP'S CO-DIRECTORS

Matthew Connelly
Professor of History

Thomas D. DiPrete
Professor of Sociology

DIRECTOR'S LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy (ISERP) in the Faculty of Arts & Sciences supports research in the social science departments in Arts and Sciences and the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). In 2021-2022 ISERP, navigated the return back to in-person activities, upholding our mission to facilitate research in the social sciences, interdisciplinary engagement and education through the QMSS program.

ISERP awarded 7 programmatic seed grants to social science faculty: Naoki Egami, Nikhar Gaikwad, Yamil Velez, and Junyan Jiang in Political Science, Reka Juhasz in Economics, Gerard Torrats-Espinosa in Sociology, and Jeffrey Shrader in SIPA. We sponsored five new thematic workshops led by Rhiannon Stephens, Naoki Egami, Gil Eyal, Nikhar Gaikwad, and Naor Ben-Yehoyada, and continued to support workshops postponed by the pandemic and departmental seminars through ISERP's Block Grants. All of our workshops have navigated the shifting landscape of gatherings and adapted quickly to keep robust discussion flowing in the social sciences at Columbia. In FY22, ISERP sponsored the celebration of five new books published by social science faculty at Columbia: Hannah Farber, Diane Vaughan, Mae Ngai, Maria José de Abreu, and Jean Louise Cohen. Despite coming out of the pandemic, we managed to coordinate events with a hybrid format, which enabled speakers to reunite in person and also join from across the country and the world.

The QMSS program continues to thrive under the leadership of Greg Eirich. After having had to patiently defer multiple times due to the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, in Fall 2021 QMSS welcomed its largest cohort ever – 213 students. QMSS activities were back in full swing, in person and on campus. Students were highly motivated to learn and came in with diverse backgrounds and goals. QMSS students continue to distinguish themselves around Columbia, winning Data Science competitions, being added to teams at SIPA, DSI and the Law School, and serving as RAs for faculty across Columbia, among many other things. One student was invited to present his thesis at the GSAS-Wide Synthesis Showcase, and QMSS student teams were selected as winners of the Columbia Data Science Student Course Project Competition, and the Columbia-Wide Data Science Society Hackathon (for the second year in a row). QMSS graduates continued to find themselves in high demand, taking on roles at many of the world's premier institutions.

Wilmot James, Senior Research Scholar at ISERP, continued to lead the Center for Pandemic Research, which started in spring 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Center ran the Vaccine Safety and Confidence-Building Working group with health, policy, and industry leaders from across Africa and the globe. It also hosted two events on the History and Future of Planetary Threats: Financing Pandemic Preparedness, and Biosecurity Risks with a focus on Russia and Ukraine.

The Center for Pandemic Research continues to be a hub for social science research and policy discussions surrounding COVID-19 and future threats. The Center awarded three seed grants: to Gerard Torrats-Espinosa on the relationship between incarceration and the pandemic, to Yao Lu on discrimination toward Asians and Hispanics during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to Suresh Naidu on the effects of the expiration of the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation on consumption, savings, and incomes of workers.

In FY22, ISERP helped faculty obtain 32 new grants, and we managed 90 active grants. Altogether, ISERP is now managing grants that total $32,993,654 funded by a mix of government, private, and non-federal grants. Awarded projects include faculty research, grants supporting doctoral student dissertations, and funding for convening scholars, and practitioners.
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In the fall we submitted a proposal for space in Uris Hall with the idea of expanding our programmatic initiatives and making them more visible at the center of campus. We are happy to report we are one of three units that were chosen, and have been working with architects to make the Uris space a launching pad for new projects.

Finally, the Institute participated in an Academic Review this year, the first in more than a decade, with internal and external review committees. Eminent faculty learned about ISERP's history, goals, and strategy. We are grateful for the careful attention they devoted to the task, and are excited to weave feedback and suggestions from the report into our work so that ISERP can continue supporting thriving social sciences at Columbia for years to come.

This will be the last annual letter from one of us – Tom – who is stepping down after serving for two three year terms as co-Director. Matt will serve one more year to help the new co-Director, Alessandra Casella, Professor of Economics and of Political Science. We are both happy to leave ISERP in such capable hands. And we are proud of what we have been able to accomplish, and look forward to seeing the Institute continue to flourish.

Matt Connelly and Tom DiPrete

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

The Research Development Office (RDO) supports investigators in Anthropology, Economics, History, Political Science, Sociology, African American and African Diaspora Studies, and the School of International and Public Affairs. For details on our services, see ISERP's website, iserp.columbia.edu.

In the last fiscal year, the RDO assisted with the submission of 79 grant proposals to multiple government agencies, foreign institutions, and private foundations.

ISERP's work resulted in 32 grants awarded by 27 sponsors in FY22. Awarded projects include faculty research, grants supporting doctoral student dissertations, training for early career researchers, and funding for convening scholars and practitioners.

Full time faculty in the social sciences and the School of International and Public Affairs are eligible to apply for up to $30,000 in seed funding to develop a proposal for an external sponsor. ISERP issued a call for proposals in FY22 and awarded 7 seed grants.

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Measuring Support for Diversity in the United States and Japan
PI: Naoki Egami
Assistant Professor of Political Science

Climate Politics in the Global South
PI: Nikhar Gaikwad
Assistant Professor of Political Science

Measuring the Policy in Industrial Policy: A Text Mining Approach
PI: Reka Juhasz
Assistant Professor of Economics

Assessing the Impact of Community-Centered Ethnic Media on Civic Engagement
PI: Yamil Velez
Assistant Professor of Political Science

China's Marketplace of Ideologies
PI: Junyan Jiang
Assistant Professor of Political Science

Hair Bias and Perception in STEM Fields
PI: Jeffrey Shrader
Assistant Professor of International and Public Affairs at the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA)

In addition to these programmatic seed grants, ISERP funded another 3 seed grants through our new Center for Pandemic Research. Read more about the center on page 26.

EXTERNAL GRANTS

Title: Improved Environmental Inspections in China and Their Effects
Sponsor: Jameel Poverty Action Lab (MIT)
Researcher: Douglas Almond

Title: Attacking Networks of Tax Evasion: Theory and Evidence.
Sponsor: National Science Foundation
Researcher: Michael Best

Title: The Militarist Trap: Societal Militarism and Its Impacts on Grand Strategy
Formation and Military Effectiveness
Sponsor: Charles Koch Foundation
Researcher: Stephen Biddle

Title: Doctoral Dissertation Research in Economics: Extracurricular Activities,
Information Asymmetry, and Labor Markets
Sponsor: National Science Foundation
Student: Tarikua Erda
Researcher: Sandra Black

Title: Extracurriculars, Information Asymmetry, and Labor Markets
Sponsor: Russell Sage Foundation
Researcher: Sandra Black

Title: Communities Speak: Rebuilding the Post-Pandemic City Through
Community Engagement
Sponsor: Bloomberg Philanthropies
Researcher: Ester Fuchs

Title: The Impact of Natural Disasters on Firm and Labor Dynamics
Sponsor: Washington Center for Equitable Growth
Researcher: Sandra Black

Title: Archives as Data: An Institute for Advanced Topics in the Digital
Humanities
Sponsor: National Endowment for the Humanities
Researcher: Matthew J. Connelly

Title: Flexible Log-Likelihood Functions
Sponsor: National Science Foundation
Researcher: Benjamin Goodrich

Title: Collaborative Research: Pollution Mitigation and Productivity in Developing Countries
Sponsor: National Science Foundation
Researcher: Gautam Gowrisankaran

Title: Measuring and Improving the Impact of Using Stadiums and Arenas for Voting
Sponsor: New Venture Fund/Temple sub
Researcher: Frank Guridy

Title: Vaccine Information Network
Sponsor: Gates (Bill and Melinda) Foundation
Researcher: James Wilmot

Title: Strengthening Pandemic and Biosecurity Preparedness
Sponsor: Nuclear Threat Initiative
Researcher: James Wilmot

Title: Race and nation: Examining the consequences of a racialized imagined community
Sponsor: American Sociological Association
Researcher: Adam Reich

Title: Doctoral Dissertation Research: Knowledge Resources in the Building of Ecological Restoration Communities
Sponsor: National Science Foundation
Student: Fern Thompsett
Researcher: Audra Simpson

Title: Doctoral Dissertation Research: Anticipation, Catastrophic Flooding, and Canal Infrastructure in Urban Coastal Settings
Sponsor: National Science Foundation
Student: Stephanie Ratte
Researcher: Audra Simpson

Title: DDRIG: An Historical Study of Science and Scientific Culture
Sponsor: National Science Foundation
Student: Reut Ullman
Researcher: Pamela Smith

Title: Preserving Government Responses to the Pandemic
Sponsor: National Historical Publications & Records Commission
Researcher: Matthew J. Connelly

Title: Statistical adjustments of sample representation in community-level estimates of COVID-19 transmission and immunity
Sponsor: National Institutes of Health/Univ of MI subaward
Researcher: Andrew Gelman

Title: The Square One Assembly on Reckoning and Justice: Transforming Justice with Truth, Dignity, and Shared Power
Sponsor: Kresge Foundation
Researcher: Bruce Western

Title: Designing a community-centered approach to youth justice reform
Sponsor: Public Welfare Foundation
Researcher: Bruce Western

Title: Local Extreme Weather Forecasts: Exploratory Research in Small Holder Farms
Sponsor: Weiss Fund/Chicago
Researcher: Jack Willis

Title: Trustworthy Bayesian modeling, inference, and computation
Sponsor: Office of Naval Research
Researcher: Andrew Gelman

Title: EpiStan: notebooks and methods for disease modeling in Stan funded
Sponsor: Chan Zuckerberg Initiative
Researcher: Andrew Gelman

Title: Organizational diversity, peer influences, and networks in policing: Quasi-experimental evidence from five law enforcement agencies in the US funded
Sponsor: Russell Sage Foundation
Researcher: Gerard Torrats-Espinosa

Title: Citizen Scrutiny and Government Efforts to Fight Corruption
Sponsor: National Science Foundation
Researcher: Michael Best

Title: Excavating the Roots of Bartram's Botanical Gardens: Science and Commerce in 19th Century America
Sponsor: Rust Family Foundation
Researcher: Zoe Crossland

Title: The strength and consequences of school-work linkages in Israel
Sponsor: U.S.-Israel Binational Science Foundation
Researcher: Thomas DiPrete

Title: Computationally-scalable Black-box Tool for Bayesian Model Estimation
Sponsor: National Science Foundation
Researcher: Andrew Gelman

Title: Revamping Bayesian Inference
Sponsor: National Science Foundation
Researcher: Benjamin Goodrich

Title: Inequality and Welfare in a Low Rate Environment
Sponsor: National Science Foundation
Researcher: Emilien Gouin-Bonenfant

Title: Advancing a New Field of American Political Economy
Sponsor: Hewlett (William & Flora) Foundation (Yale University)
Researcher: Alexander W. Hertel-Fernandez

Title: School-to-Work Pathway and Racial/Ethnic Inequality among College Graduates
Sponsor: Washington Center for Equitable Growth
Researcher: Yao Lu

Title: Doctoral Dissertation Research: The political economy of migration, labor, and documentation
Sponsor: National Science Foundation
Student: Alexander Maier
Researcher: Rosalind C. Morris

Title: To continue support of the discovery and iterative use of machine learning models through development and adoption of the AI Model Share platform
Sponsor: Sloan (Alfred P.) Foundation
Researcher: Michael D. Parrott

Title: Climate change and calorie crops - global impacts, adaptation and implications for US agricultural communities: Collaborative research with Columbia University and Boston University
Sponsor: Boston University (Department of Agriculture)
Researcher: Wolfram Schlenker

Title: Understanding Multi-Stressor and Multi-Scale Drivers of Feedbacks, Cascading Failures, and Risk Management Pathways within Complex MSD Systems
Sponsor: Pennsylvania State University (Department of Energy)
Researcher: Wolfram Schlenker

Title: Doctoral Dissertation Research in Economics: Residential Segregation and Neighbor-Based Informal Hiring
Sponsor: National Science Foundation
Student: Tam Mai
Researcher: Miguel S. Urquiola

Title: Nolkup: an app to access low arsenic water in Bangladesh
Sponsor: U.S. Agency for International Development
Researcher: Jack Willis

Title: Credible, Civil-Military Relations, and the Use of Force
Sponsor: Koch Foundation
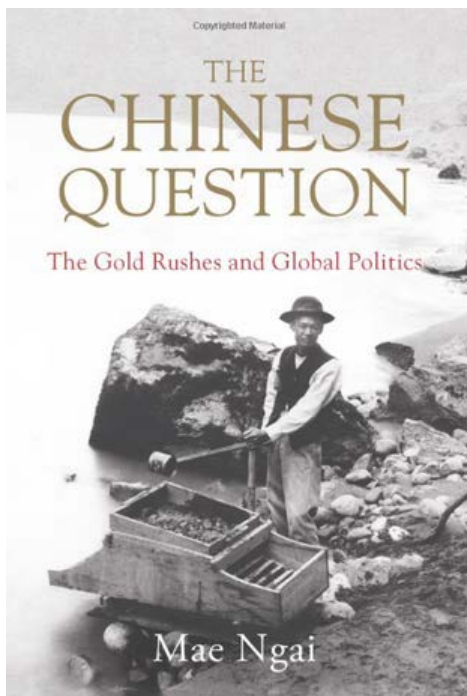Researcher: Keren Yarhi-Milo

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

Published Book

Mae Ngai
Lung Family Professor of Asian American Studies and Professor of History

The Chinese Question: The Gold Rushes, Chinese Migration, and Global Politics

W. W. Norton, August 2021

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT
Seed Grant Awardees Highlights

Hassan Afrouzi,
Assistant Professor of Economics

In "Is it the message or the messenger? Examining movement in immigration beliefs," we ask how political leaders influence the beliefs of their constituents. To this end, we use a large-scale experiment with over 12,800 participants to explore the relative importance of partisan messages versus leader sources on beliefs about immigration. Participants listen to anti-immigrant and pro-immigrant speeches from Presidents Obama and Trump, with benchmark treatments recorded by an actor to control for message content and non-ideological presidential speeches to control for leader priming.

We find that political leader sources influence beliefs beyond the content of their messages when leaders deliver unanticipated messages to individuals in their own party. This evidence supports the hypothesis that individuals will "follow their leader" to new policy positions. We also estimate the combined effect of political message and leader sources, finding that participants from both parties update their beliefs based on the total effect of presidential speeches, with effects that are larger for speeches that oppose the party prior.
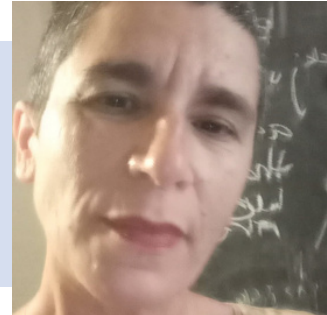
To further understand the interaction of leader sources and partisan messages, we also decompose the total effect by fixing the presidential source and varying the message between a non-ideological statement and an immigration message. This decomposition does not display any independent source priming effect related to the brand identity of leaders; participants do not change their views on immigration based on hearing a non-ideological message from either president.

The study sheds light on the determinants of leader influence and highlights the importance of both political messages and sources in shaping beliefs. The findings have implications for policies aimed at communicating new information effectively or correcting misconceptions in beliefs. Immigration is an ideal context for this study because it is both a meaningful policy topic for voters and voters' views on immigration vary substantially across party lines. Overall, the experiment offers a novel way to isolate the impacts of political message content and political leader sources on beliefs and provides valuable insights into the formation of political beliefs.

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

Seed Grant Awardees Highlights

Maria José de Abreu,
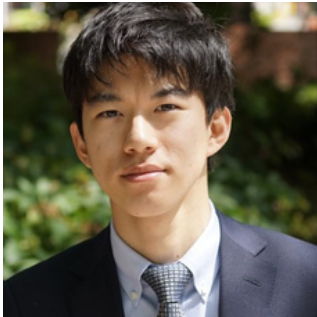Assistant Professor of Anthropology

Maria José de Abreu focuses her new research on the theoretical and practical dimensions of the concept of household (oikos) in contemporary Portugal (with extensions to Angola). Drawing on the classic articulation between household and nation as the modular horizon of politics her research asks: how do entities such as the state, the market, the media, but also other non-human elements such as geology, geography or the weather, compose a particular oikopolitics of the present? Her choice of the term oikos—a term that encompasses at once house, economy and ecology draws energy from its semantic flexibility, a conceptual apparatus through which to understand the complex logics and tactics of governance that are presently restructuring the status of this beholden southernmost European country. Specifically, de Abreu's project investigates the trajectories and policies implemented by the state in response to the 2008 financial crisis that have opened Portugal to the mediation of foreign capital, including the recent boom in monetarily rewarding but humanly devastating tourism. The consequences of this series of measures are indeterminate and contradictory yet far-reaching, and seem to draw energy from the very impasses the measures generate.

In 2020-21, with the support of an ISERP seed grant, de Abreu launched a project titled "Laboring in Abstraction: Oil and Return among Portuguese Labor Migrants to Angola". During the financial crisis Portugal encouraged citizens to re-turn to its former colony in order to solve its own state of insolvency by referring to the great empire it once was, treating its link to Angola as a testament to the nation's wide-open frontiers and legendary entrepreneurial spirit. The project accesses the post- 2008 phenomenon of mass labor migration of Portuguese young professionals to Angola, particularly the capital city of Luanda, as a means to keep up with the "good life" pre-crisis.

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

Seed Grant Awardees Highlights

Naoki Egami,
Assistant Professor of Political Science

In the past year, Professor Egami's research has focused on developing novel statistical tools that help scientists and policymakers generalize statistical findings to new populations, contexts, and settings. This question of external validity has a long history in the social sciences, at least going back to the 1960s. And it has become even more essential these days because social scientists have conducted a large number of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) over the last few decades, and huge opportunities and challenges of accumulating causal knowledge have become evident.

To improve empirical strategies toward external validity and generalization in the social sciences, Egami conducts three lines of projects. The first line of work proposes a causal framework of external validity to formally analyze various concerns of external validity, such as non-representative study populations, transportability, and site-selection bias. This work with Erin Hartman from UC Berkeley, "Elements of External Validity: Framework, Design, and Analysis," was published in the American Political Science Review in 2022. The second line of work examines how to design RCTs to improve external validity. In particular, with Diana Lee, a Ph.D. student in Columbia Political Science, Egami develops a new approach to selecting experimental sites such that researchers can credibly generalize causal findings from RCTs. Egami will apply this new method to study how the support for diversity differs across countries with the ISERP-funded project. Finally, the third line of work studies how to assess the robustness of causal findings to external validity bias when RCTs were not designed with external validity in mind. Egami co-authored this paper, "Quantifying Robustness to External Validity Bias," in 2022 with Martin Devaux, a Ph.D. student in Columbia Political Science. These projects complement each other, and they together provide a unified pipeline to improve external validity in the social sciences.

In 2022, Egami also started several collaborative projects on new methodologies for causal inference with Columbia colleagues, such as Hongseok Namkoong (Business School), Eunji Kim (Political Science), Amir Feder (Data Science Institute), and David Blei (Computer Science and Statistics).

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

Seed Grant Awardees Highlights

Gerard Torrats-Espinosa,
Professor of Sociology

Dr. Torrats-Espinosa, in collaboration with Dr. Bruce Western and researchers at the Columbia Justice Lab, has been examining the relationship between incarceration and the coronavirus pandemic in New York City. Jails, prisons, and detention centers have been hot spots of the coronavirus pandemic in the United States.

In August 2020, compared with the general population, the COVID-19 infection rate was five times higher among incarcerated people and three times higher among correctional staff (Saloner et al., 2020). Moreover, although correctional settings may seem isolated from the communities in which they are located, there is, in fact, continuous movement in and out of facilities, both as staff go to and from work, and as people are admitted and discharged. This movement entails transmission risks to correctional settings but also to surrounding communities.

As a result, just like with other epidemics of the past thirty years, conditions of confinement in U.S. jails and prisons pose a significant threat to public health during the coronavirus pandemic (National Academies, 2020).

Using a unique combination of administrative and qualitative data, Dr. Torrats-Espinosa and colleagues are studying how incarcerated people experienced the pandemic and how the pandemic affected movement into and out of the jail (also known as churn).

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

Seed Grant Awardees Highlights

Jeffrey Shrader,
Professor of SIPA

Jeffrey Shrader and Tarikua Erda (PhD candidate, Sustainable Development) are studying how norms about appearance affect students and faculty in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. The number of women and historically underrepresented minorities in STEM academic positions has grown in recent years. But large race and gender gaps remain, especially when it comes to individuals completing post-secondary degrees and working in academia long term. The current research project studies whether biased perceptions of appearance--particularly how people judge the hair of Black individuals--plays into this dynamic.

In private-sector workplaces, biases against the appearance and grooming habits of Black people has been well documented. Black people, and Black women in particular, are perceived as less competent and professional if they wear natural hair styles. The current study asks whether a similar pattern holds in academia, a setting that prides itself on ideals of meritocracy. The study also tests the effectiveness of potential actions to address this bias including awareness training and public policies like the CROWN Act.

The first phase of the study, completed last year, documented rates of hair-related bias among a representative sample of Americans. The results show that academia is not immune. Even when asked about individuals in an academic STEM setting, study participants judged Black people with natural versus straightened hair styles as less professional. The results, however, also showed that teaching people about the history of hair-related bias holds promise for reducing these biases. The next phase of the study will be conducted with current professors and students in STEM fields. The researchers hope to find that interventions remain effective among these groups as well.

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

Cont.

In other work conducted with Laura Bakkensen and Derek Lemoine (both at University of Arizona), Shrader is studying inequities in public policies that help people adapt to a changing climate. One of the main risks from climate change is mortality from extreme heat. An important policy tool to reduce heat-related deaths is weather forecasts. If people receive and can act on accurate weather forecasts, they can potentially avoid exposure to the worst weather, saving lives. In their study, the researchers show, for the first time, that this life-saving potential of forecasts is true. On average, accurate weather forecasts help Americans almost entirely avoid mortality from heat.

But that average effect disguises an important inequity. People of color tend to experience no benefit from more accurate weather forecasts. White people, in contrast, accrue substantial benefits. This result is an important part of the reason why people of color in the US experience relatively higher rates of heat-related mortality and are at higher risk of further deaths due to climate change. In ongoing work, the researchers are studying the factors that prevent forecasts from being as effective for people of color. Two mechanisms have appeared so far. People of color are more likely to work in settings that are heat-exposed and have inflexible hours. Access to at-home air conditioning also likely plays an important role. Policies that relax these two constraints have the potential, when combined with accurate information from weather forecasts, to reduce climate change inequities.

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

Seed Grant Awardees Highlights

Gregory Mann,
Professor of History

Over the past two years, a series of coups d'état have upended African politics, notably in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea. In those countries, new military governments have enjoyed a good deal of popular support from their own citizens, even as their rise to power provoked consternation in Western embassies

What explains these sharply different reactions? In November 2022—with a conference that became ever more relevant as it approached in time—Gregory Mann convened a meeting of scholars of Africa to explore the little-studied history of military rule on the continent. Participants asked whether the history and the memory of past moments of military rule conditioned responses to current crises. They explored both how soldiers governed and how citizens countered their quests to remain in power. In the months to come, working with colleagues at Sciences-Po, Mann will convene two more meetings on the current condition of military rule in the West African Sahel. Whatever is happening, it is surely more complex than what some analysts have dubbed "democratic backsliding." Indeed, the oft-stated idea that good government equates to "civilian government" is increasingly being put to the test on the ground. For the moment, whether or not African citizens prefer military rule—data is mixed on this point—they might be getting it. The implications of that fact represent an urgent object of study.

EVENTS

The History and Future of Planetary Threats

ISERP convenes meetings to examine historic and conteporary catastrophic risks and hazards, whether natural, accident or deliberate. This series was moderated by Wilmot James, Senior Research Scholar at ISERP.

Financing Preparedness

November 3, 2021

Featuring Amanda Glassman, Jeffrey Sachs, Chinwe Lucia Ochu, and Natalia Pasternak.

Biological risks and hazards in the world today with special focus on Russia and Ukraine.

May 4, 2022

Featuring Jessica Bell, Hayley Anne Severance, Gregory Koblentz, Andrew C. Weber, Rebecca Katz, and W. Ian Lipkin.

Watch the recording of this panel on Youtube here.

Vaccine Safety and Confidence-Building Working Group

The VacSafe WG catalyzes and supports projects that generate, scale and analyze actively-collected vaccine safety surveillance and pharmaco-vigilance data in Africa. The aim is to monitor adverse events to help clinicians intervene if necessary to save lives and increase public trust and confidence in vaccines through the rigorous collection and dissemination of this data. Not only are these capabilities a crucial priority if COVID-19 is to be vanquished on the continent, they will also be essential infrastructure for future pandemics and rapid vaccination campaigns.

VacSafe's pilot project, The Vaccine Information Network (VIN) builds and tests a vaccine-safety surveillance system for currently approved COVID-19 vaccines at sites in southern Africa. VIN's purpose is to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates by (1) establishing how and why minds are changed and (2) using that information to frame confidence-building messages communicated by trusted community leaders (influencers) in partnership with public health authorities. VIN is sponsored by Schmidt Futures, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Aspen Pharmacare.

EVENTS

New Books in the Arts & Sciences

The New Books in the Arts and Sciences series is jointly hosted by ISERP, the Society of Fellows/Heyman Center for the Humanities, and the Divisional Deans of Arts and Sciences. The series celebrates newly published monographs by Columbia Arts and Sciences Faculty with panel discussions, book-selling, and receptions.

In 2021-2022 ISERP hosted the following events for newly published work by Social Science faculty:

Celebrating Recent Work by Hannah Farber
Assistant Professor of History

Underwriters of the United States: How Insurance Shaped the American Founding
March 8, 2022
Panelists: Charly Coleman, Jeremy Kessler, Emma Hart.
Moderated by Adam Kosto.

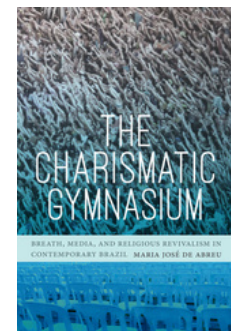## Celebrating Recent Work by Maria José de Abreu
Assistant Professor of Anthropology

The Charismatic Gymnasium: Breath, Media, and Religious Revivalism in Contemporary Brazil
March 10, 2022
Panelists: Stefania Pandolfo, Elayne Oliphant, Matthew Engelke.
Moderated by Brian Larkin,
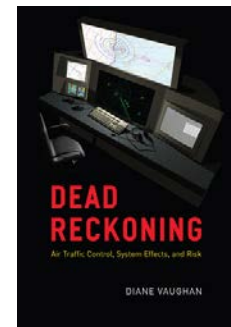
Celebrating Recent Work by Diane Vaughan
Professor in the Department of Sociology

Dead Reckoning: Air Traffic Control, System Effects, and Risk
April 7, 2022
Panelists: Gil Eyal, Iddo Tavory, Venkat Venkatasubramanian,
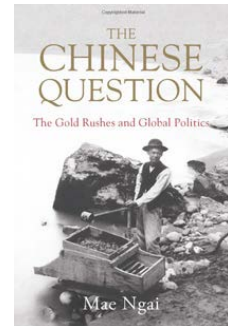Moderated by Bruce Western.

EVENTS

New Books in the Arts & Sciences

Celebrating Recent Work by Mae Ngai

Lung Family Professor of Asian American Studies and Professor of History, and Co-Director of the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race

The Chinese Question: The Gold Rushes and Global Politics
April 13, 2022
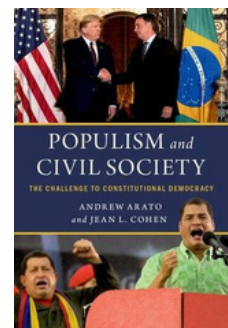Panelists: Elizabeth Blackmar, Lydia H. Liu, Mary Lui. Moderated by Adam Kosto.

Celebrating Recent Work by Jean Louise Cohen, Nell and Herbert M. Singer Professor of Political Thought and Contemporary Civilization, and Andrew Arato

Populism and Civil Society: The Challenge to Constitutional Democracy
April 28, 2022
Co-Author: Andrew Arato
Panelists: Mabel Berezin, Jedediah S. Purdy, Sheri Berman. Moderated by: Gregory Wawro

EVENTS
ISERP CONFERENCES

Conference on Environmental Economics and Policy

May 6, 2022
Organized by Douglas Almond and Wolfram Schlenker

The Federal Reserve Bank of New York and Columbia University Center for Environmental Economics and Policy (CEEP) jointly hosted an in-person conference on environmental economics and policy, with speakers including New York Fed President John C. Williams and a keynote address by Ben Harris, Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy at the U.S. Department of Treasury. Several students in SIPA's PhD in Sustainable Development program and alumni were on the program, including Clara Berestycki, Charles Taylor, Ana Varela Varela, and Tarikua Erda.

Economists presented research on topics including how low-income communities are disproportionately impacted by climate risks, the unintended consequences of mandatory flood insurance, and how different neighborhoods react to flooding.

ISERP Conference Funding

ISERP awarded five conferences through our Calls for Proposals during FY22. Due to delays in large in-person gatherings, four of these will be held in 2022-2023. Keep an eye on ISERP's Upcoming Events to learn more and attend!

We typically release Calls for Conference Proposals each fall and spring. Faculty in the six social science departments and SIPA are eligible to apply. Learn more about how to secure funding for your proposed conference here.

INITIATIVES

Center for Pandemic Research

ISERP established the Center for Pandemic Research in spring 2020 when the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic brought about the need for a quick mobilization of resources towards social science pandemic research. Since then, ISERP has engaged with and funded projects ranging from economic impacts, to changes in racial and ethnic bias brought on by the pandemic, to international vaccine uptake. The Center has supported faculty seed projects, graduate student research, public online events, and the in-depth Vacsafe project described below. The Center is chaired by Dr. Wilmot James, Senior Research Scholar at ISERP.

In 2021-2022, ISERP continued supporting projects through the Center for Pandemic Research's faculty seed grants. The following projects either continued or were newly funded in FY22:

The Relationship between Incarceration and COVID-19
Gerard Torrats-Espinosa
Sociology

Effects of the Expiration of the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation on Consumption, Savings, and Incomes of Workers Evidence from Linked Survey-Transactions Data
Suresh Naidu
SIPA & Economics

Prejudices and Discrimination Toward Asians and Hispanics During and After COVID-19
Yao Lu
Sociology

INITIATIVES

Centers

Applied Statistics Center
Director: Andrew Gelman

Center for the Study of Development Strategies
Director: Macartan Humphreys

Center for the Study of Wealth and Inequality
Director: Seymour Spilerman

Center on African American Politics and Society
Director: Frederick C. Harris

Center on Organizational Innovation
Director: David Stark

Columbia Experimental Laboratory for the Social Sciences
Director: Alessandra Casella
Associate Directors: Mark Dean and Jacopo Perego

Columbia Justice Lab
Directors: Vincent Schiraldi and Bruce Western

The AI Model Share Project
Director: Michael Parrott

Workshops

History and Climate Change: Africa, Indigenous & Latin America, South Asia
Rhiannon Stephens

Political Methodology
Naoki Egami, Andrew Gelman, Donald Green

Sociology of Algorithms
Gil Eyal

Climate Change Cooperation
Nikhar Gaikwad

Wealth and Inequality Workshop Block Grant
Thomas DiPrete and Yao Lu

The 'Crime-Criminalization Nexus' Seminar
Naor Ben-Yehoyada

INITIATIVES

IIGSS

The ISERP Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Seminar (IIGSS) is a yearlong ISERP-sponsored seminar that seeks to foster a conversation across the social science communities at Columbia to discuss the diverse ways in which interdisciplinarity can be mobilized. The ultimate goal of the seminar series is to explore how interdisciplinary approaches can contribute to and enrich traditional disciplines and what such interdisciplinarity demands from them.

This year, the IIGSS committee decided to choose a different theme for each semester. The themes were selected for their relevance to current affairs and their potential to involve research across disciplines. The theme for Spring 2022 was Transformation and the theme for Fall 2022 was Connection.

The ISERP Interdisciplinary Graduate Seminar Series held the following seminars this year:

- February 18: Sohini Chattopadhyay (History), Crematorium and Technologies of Mass Death in Colonial India
- March 4: John Beeson (Art History and Archeology), Culture under Neoliberalism: Re-Making Contemporary Art within the New World Order
- March 25: Bhargav Gopal (Economics), How Do Firms Respond to Gender Quotas on Corporate Boards? Evidence from California's SB826
- April 22: Alice Gorton (History), Three Acres and a Plough: Agricultural Imperialism in Britain's Settler Empire, 1873–1914
- October 21: Alexander Borsa (History), how lay sexology centers incorporated the "natural law" (legge naturale) as a way to organize legal and medical knowledge on homosexuality and transvestism
- November 11: Rohan Shah (History), commodity crises and resource contests during their high point, between 1972-1976, explaining how they produced a subtle but consequential transformation in US foreign economic policy
- December 2: Lucas Rene Ramos (Sociology), The Financialization of Fertility: Private Equity, Political Economy, and Reproductive Health in the U.S.
- December 16: Anna Papp (SIPA), Plastics, Pollution, and the Global Trade in Garbage

All seminars consisted of a 1 hour presentation, and a 30 minute Q&A.

INITIATIVES

IIGSS

LUCAS RAMOS
HISTORY

FRAIL CONJUGAL NATION
—
HOW SEXUAL DEVIANCY SHAPED DIVORCE IN 1960S ITALY

Friday, December 2nd
12:15-1:30PM EST
Knox Hall 509 & Zoom

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY | ISERP

CREMATORIUM AND TECHNOLOGIES OF MASS DEATH IN COLONIAL INDIA

Sohini Chattopadhyay, History
February 18th, 12 pm - 1:30 pm
Online

ANNA PAPP
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, SIPA
JOINT WITH MATTHEW GORDON
—
PLASTICS, POLLUTION, AND THE GLOBAL TRADE IN GARBAGE

Friday, December 16th
12:15-1:30PM EST
Knox Hall 509 & via Zoom

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY | ISERP

ALEXANDER BORSA
SOCIOMEDICAL SCIENCES AND SOCIOLOGY

THE FINANCIALIZATION OF FERTILITY: PRIVATE EQUITY, POLITICAL ECONOMY, AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN THE UNITED STATES

Friday, October 21st
12 pm - 1:30 pm EST
Knox Hall 509

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY | ISERP

THREE ACRES AND A PLOUGH:
AGRICULTURAL IMPERIALISM IN BRITAIN'S SETTLER EMPIRE 1873-1914

Alice Gorton, History
April 22nd, 12 pm - 1:30 pm
Room 457 at Schermerhorn Ext.
Food will be served

ROHAN SHAH
HISTORY

INNER LIMITS OF MAN OUTER LIMITS OF EARTH: COMMODITY POLITICS IN THE EARLY 1970S

Friday, November 11th
12:15-1:30PM EST
Knox Hall 509 & via Zoom

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY | ISERP

HOW DO FIRMS RESPOND TO GENDER QUOTAS ON CORPORATE BOARDS?
EVIDENCE FROM CALIFORNIA'S SB826

Bhargav Gopal, Economics
March 25th, 12 pm - 1:30 pm
Room 457 Schermerhorn Extension (Lunch will be served)

CULTURE UNDER NEOLIBERALISM:
RE-MAKING CONTEMPORARY ART WITHIN THE NEW WORLD ORDER

John Beeson , Art History and Archeology
March 4th, 12 pm - 1:30 pm
Room 457 Schermerhorn Extension (Lunch will be served)

PROGRAMS

Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences
Master's Program

This year, the Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences (QMSS) MA program welcomed its largest cohort ever, 213 students – it was quite so large in part because some QMSS students were finally able to join us, after having had to patiently defer multiple times due to the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. Their excitement to finally start learning was palpable. The students entered QMSS with incredibly diverse backgrounds and goals. They were from well over a dozen countries, and they were trained in scores of majors, including classic social sciences (e.g., sociology, political science, economics, psychology, history), but also data science, geography, information systems, accounting, philosophy, international relations, English, communications, finance, music, statistics and many more!

All of the QMSS students threw themselves deeply into their studies, taking full advantage of Columbia classes and activities, which were fully back in person and on campus.

The QMSS students continued to do exemplary work, whether as research assistants or via their theses, or on group projects, or in internships – working to push the boundaries of what can be done in an interdisciplinary MA program at the intersection of social science and data science here at Columbia. QMSS faculty continued to inspire students to look for valuable and impactful ways to analyze data, whether via geographic information systems (GIS), or Bayesian statistics, or social network analysis, or machine learning, or natural language processing, or data visualization, or via numerous other techniques practiced in modern data science.

Hackathon Winners, QMSS

PROGRAMS

As just one example of the type of work QMSS students had done this year, one student was invited to present his thesis at the GSAS-Wide Synthesis Showcase, in which he shared his research where he found that fintech development in China significantly improved the investment efficiency of local small to medium firms.

QMSS students continued to be recognized for their efforts as well. Much like in the previous year, QMSS again had a team chosen as a finalist for the Columbia Data Science Student Course Project Competition, judged by the Data Science Institute's Education Working Group Committee. The team created a valuable project, in collaboration with the Census Bureau. The project worked with Census data to enable community organizations to visualize changes and trends in data through maps and graphs, empowering them to make better decisions. The QMSS team was praised for its creative use of data science; its potential societal impact; and its "Data for Good" mission.

In fact, last year, we nearly doubled the number of large-scale partnerships we have with organizations, including (besides the aforementioned Census Bureau) Memorial-Sloan Kettering, Lovelytics, the United Nations, and KPMG Consulting. Overall, our Innovation Lab is growing and supporting cutting-edge work, connecting students with alumni mentors, research institutes, and organizations across industries.

QMSS students continued to excel out of the classroom in other ways too. For the second year in a row, a team made up exclusively of QMSS students won first place in the Columbia-Wide Data Science Society Hackathon. They successfully modeled the number of days until the air quality index returned to "Good" during the 2020 California wildfire season, which would allow California residents to make appropriate decisions about when to return to their homes. In general, QMSS students made sure to get to know each other and learn outside of the classroom too.

The QMSS student group, QASR - the Society for Quantitative Approaches to Social Research, offered a rich variety of advanced programming for the MA students, including a virtual mini-hackathon using NYC 311 data, trips and tours around the City, and fun in-person events.

PROGRAMS

Our QMSS research assistant program continues to provide vital research support to dozens of Columbia faculty, working on over 50 faculty research projects over the last year. Additionally, a number of QMSS students were selected as Data For Good Scholars to work with Columbia faculty via research internships run through the Data Science Institute.

QMSS graduates continued to find themselves in high demand, taking on roles at many of the world's premier institutions, such as Doctors Without Borders, Mercer, NBCUniversal, KPMG, the United Nations, The New York Times, Salesforce, Citibank, Stanford, Oxford, Harvard, and Columbia itself.

They join the hundreds of QMSS alumni who distinguish themselves as data scientists, research directors, senior analysts and academic researchers in many fields.

As it has done for the last 22 years, QMSS will continue to look for ways to add value to the experiences of the MA students in the program, and also for ways to support advanced quantitative research among the larger Columbia community as well.

Gregory Eirich

Shuo Huang, GSAS-Wide
Synthesis Showcase

PROGRAMS

PER - Program for Economic Research

Harrison Hong, John R. Eckel, Jr. Professor of Financial Economics and Executive Director, Program for Economic Research

December 2021 PER co-sponsored the **13th Annual Kenneth J. Arrow Lecture** featuring David M. Kreps. Professor Kreps presented "Not Every Couple Should Have a Prenup: How the Context and History of Exchange Affects Personal Preferences, and Why This Matters Both to Economic Theory and to Practical Human Resource Management." Discussants included Alessandra Casella; Suresh Naidu; and Joseph E. Stiglitz. José Scheinkman gave introductory remarks.

In the spring of 2022 PER co-sponsored **A Conversation with Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis President James Bullard**. Panelists included Michael Woodford, and Tim Duy; Sassan Ghahramani moderated.

PER Live Webinar Series, a recurring set of discussions involving finance and business thought leaders, continued with CFM-PER Alternative Data Initiative Conferences, a series of events on the economic and financial applications of alternative data co-sponsored with Capital Fund Management (CFM).

Rise of Retail Investors: Implications for Policy and Markets was a Zoom conference that took place on Tuesday, June 29th, as part of the ongoing CFM-PER Alternative Data Initiative. The confluence of social media and technology has led to a resurgence of retail investor trading activity in financial markets, whether it is speculation on meme stocks like Gamestop or cryptocurrencies like Dogecoin. The goal of this event was to explore the use of big data regarding retail investor order flows to understand the implications of this resurgence for financial markets and regulators. The panel featured a lecture by Charles Jones.

Corporate Debt and the Macroeconomy. Corporate debt markets play an increasingly important role in the macroeconomy. Shocks to these markets, whether during the financial crisis of 2008 or the recent COVID-19 episode, have severe impacts on economic growth. The goal of this event was to explore the use of data on debt contracts to understand these macroeconomic implications. The panel featured a lecture by Yueran Ma on how the use of microeconomic data and debt contracts can shed light on macro-finance channels and other important economic adjustment issues. Panelists included Valentin Haddad, and Laurent Laloux; moderator was José Scheinkman.
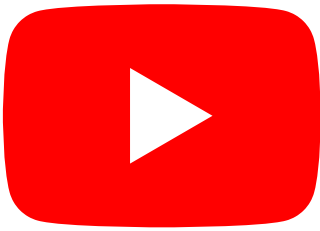
PROGRAMS

Measuring Geopolitical Risks. Politics and international relations directly impact market conditions and geopolitical risk runs high during major crises like 9/11, the Iraq war or the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Elevated geopolitical risk leads to decline in real activity, lower stock returns and capital flows away from emerging markets and investors often struggle to correctly price in these effects. Can we quantify and systematically score the risk of disputes and hostilities between countries given the complexity of the context and the developments? This event featured a talk by Matteo Iacoviello, who presented his work on employing textual analysis of news articles to build a geopolitical risk index. The panel discussion included Simona Abis, Matthieu Gomez, and Phil Seager. The panel was moderated by José Scheinkman.

Student Support: As part of the commitment by the Department of Economics to support graduate students, PER serves as the main provider of funding for data set purchases, experimental or field research, as well as support for conference travel. PER provided summer stipends for 25 graduate students and summer research appointments for 10 MA students; in the fall PER funded support for PhD students on the job market.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Website & Social Media

YouTube

Find live-streamed and recorded ISERP events including seminars, book panels, executive education courses, and more. Event series are conveniently collected into playlists.

Facebook

Stay up-to-date about upcoming events, recent faculty research and media highlights, and activity from our partners across Columbia and beyond.

Twitter

See a calendar of upcoming events and highlights from each monthly newsletter.

Sign up for our Newsletter to stay up to date.

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