

Education

Harvard University

2019 –

Ph.D., Economics, expected 2025

University of California, Berkeley

2013 – 2017

B.A., Economics and Physics, with highest distinction

Working Papers

Political Sorting in the U.S. Labor Market: Evidence and Explanations

With Martin Koenen

We study political sorting in the labor market and examine its sources. Merging voter file data and online résumés to create a panel of 34.5 million people, we show that Democrats and Republicans choose distinctive career paths and employers. This leads to marked segregation at the workplace: a Democrat or Republican’s coworker is 10% more likely to share their party than expected. Then, we ask whether segregation arises because jobs shape workers’ politics or because workers’ politics shape their job choices. To study the first, we use a quasi-experimental design leveraging the timing of job transitions. We find that uncommitted workers do adopt the politics of their workplace, but not workers who were already registered Democrats or Republicans. The average effect is too small to generate the segregation we document. To study the second, we measure the intensity of workers’ preferences for politically compatible jobs using two survey experiments motivated by the observational data. Here, we find that the median Democrat or Republican would trade off 3% in annual wages for an ideologically congruent version of a similar job. These preferences are strong enough to generate segregation similar to the observed levels.

Vanguard: Black Veterans and Civil Rights After World War I

With Desmond Ang

Revision requested, Quarterly Journal of Economics

Nearly 400,000 Black men were drafted into the National Army during World War I, where they toiled in segregated units and received little formal training. Leveraging novel variation from the WWI draft lottery and millions of digitized military and NAACP records, we document the pioneering role these men would play in the early civil rights movement. Relative to observably similar individuals from the same draft board, Black men randomly inducted into the Army were significantly more likely to join the nascent NAACP and to become prominent community leaders in the New Negro era. We find little evidence that these effects are explained by migration or improved socioeconomic status. Rather, corroborating historical accounts about the catalyzing influence of institutional racism in the military, we show that increased civic activism was driven by soldiers who experienced the most discriminatory treatment while serving their country.

Zero-Sum Thinking and the Roots of U.S. Political Divides

With Nathan Nunn, Sandra Sequeira, and Stefanie Stantcheva

Revision requested, American Economic Review

We investigate the origins and implications of zero-sum thinking — the belief that gains for one individual or group tend to come at the cost of others. Using a new survey of a representative sample of 20,400 US residents, we measure zero-sum thinking, political preferences, policy views, and a rich array of ancestral information spanning four generations. We find that a more zero-sum mindset is strongly associated with more support for government redistribution, race- and gender-based affirmative action, and more restrictive immigration policies. Furthermore, zero-sum thinking can be traced back to the experiences of both the individual and their ancestors, encompassing factors such as the degree of intergenerational upward mobility they experienced, whether they immigrated to the United States or lived in a location with more immigrants, and whether they were enslaved or lived in a location with more enslavement.

The Effect of Childhood Environment on Political Behavior: Evidence from Young U.S. Movers

With Jacob Brown, Enrico Cantoni, Martin Koenen, and Vincent Pons

We ask how childhood environment shapes political behavior. We measure young voters’ participation and party

affiliation in nationally comprehensive voter files and reconstruct their childhood location histories based on their parents' addresses. We compare outcomes of individuals who moved between the same origin and destination counties but at different ages. Those who spend more time in the destination are more influenced by it: Growing up in a county where their peers are 10 percentage points more likely to become Republicans makes them 4.7 percentage points more likely to become Republican themselves upon entering the electorate. The effects are of similar magnitude for Democratic partisanship and turnout. These exposure effects are primarily driven by teenage years, and they persist but decay after the first election. They reflect both state-level factors and factors varying at a smaller scale such as peer effects.

Awards

Stone Ph.D. Scholarship in Inequality and Wealth Concentration	2021
NSF Graduate Research Fellowship	2019
Harvard Presidential Fellowship	2019
Finalist for the University Medal, awarded to UC Berkeley's top graduate	2018
Schimbor Prize, awarded for the best honors thesis in Economics	2018
Highest honors in Economics	2017
Phi Beta Kappa, elected as a junior	2016
Regents' and Chancellor's Scholarship	2013

Seminars and Conferences

Political Economy at Brown	2024
International Conference on Computational Social Science	2023
American Association for Public Opinion Research	2022

Research Assistance

Melissa Dell	2020
Stefano DellaVigna	2017
Zachary Bleemer	2017

Teaching

Introduction to Econometrics (Harvard) <i>Teaching Fellow</i>	2023
Introduction to Economics (UC Berkeley) <i>Undergraduate Student Instructor</i>	2017

Employment

The New York Times <i>Graphics Editor</i>	2018 – 2019
---	-------------

Affiliations

Institute for Quantitative Social Science, Center for American Political Studies, Opportunity Insights, Social Economics Lab

Referee Service

Journal of Political Economy, Quarterly Journal of Economics, AER: Insights, The Economic Journal

Skills

R, Python, Javascript, GIS (proficient); SQL, Stata (familiar)

Clearances

Special Sworn Status, U.S. Census Bureau

Updated October 2024