

Arseniy Samsonov

e-mail: asamsonov94@ucla.edu

phone: +36-203-13-8002

website: <https://sites.google.com/view/asamsonov>

Education

2021 University of California, Los Angeles. Ph.D. in Political Science. June 2021.

2015 Joint Baccalaureate of Higher School of Economics and New Economic School. Bachelor of Arts in Economics.

Academic Positions

2021-present Postdoctoral researcher, Budapest University of Technology and Economics, QSMS research group.

Teaching

2022 Instructor: "Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in International Studies", RANEPA. Instructor: "Writing rules to incentivize people", "Making decisions as a group", short intensive courses, Budapest University of Technology and Economics.

2021 Teaching Assistant: "Arms Control and International Security", UCLA. Instructor: International Relations, RANEPA.

2020 Instructor, "Comparative Politics", The Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences. Instructor, "Political Economics", Moscow State University. Teaching Assistant: "Political Economy of Climate Change", UCLA.

2019 Instructor, "Quantitative Methods in Political Science", The Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences. Teaching Assistant, "Public Economics", Higher School of Economics.

2016-2019 Teaching Assistant, "Politics and Strategy", "World Politics", "International Political Economy", "Arms Control and International Security", Department of Political Science, UCLA.

2015 Teaching Assistant, "Game Theory", Higher School of Economics.

Research Interests

- Political Economy.
- Economic Theory.

Publications

2021 "The fragmentation of views in a democracy." - *Economics of Governance* 22.3 (2021): 215-256.

Abstract: Are voters in democracies more competent if there are more media outlets? To answer this question, I provide a game-theoretic model of media capture and political persuasion in democratic countries. In the model, there are two politicians, the Incumbent and the Challenger. They co-opt the media by offering them access to information. In exchange, the media support politicians who are available for interviews or include journalists in press pools. Voters choose like-minded media. I show that if the Incumbent is sufficiently popular and has little policy information, then media bias in her favor weakly increases in the number of media outlets. Otherwise, media bias in the Incumbent's favor weakly decreases in the number of media outlets. The welfare of voters weakly increases and decreases in the respective cases. The intuition is that, in equilibrium, the Incumbent can co-opt only one media outlet and ensure that enough voters read it. In this case, media outlets compete for access to the Incumbent and agree for a higher bias as their number increases.

Working Papers

"How can social media limit disinformation?", submitted

Abstract: Political disinformation is dangerous for democracies. Social and government pressure made Facebook and Twitter start labeling posts that contain disinformation. This policy became known as fact-checking. Under which conditions will social media platforms fact-check? I propose a model in which two platforms decide whether to fact-check a politician. One of the platforms is ex-ante more attractive to voters than the other. The politician chooses which platforms to use and how often to misrepresent the state of the world if it is bad for her. In equilibrium, fact-checking is more likely if the politician has low approval or one of the platforms is highly more attractive than its competitor. The model's policy implication is that reducing market power for the dominant social media firm can make fact-checking less likely.

"Bargaining over information structures" (with Kemal Kivanç Aköz), submitted

Abstract: How transparent would informational institutions be if the founders of those institutions have to agree on the design? In this paper, we explore this question and analyze distributional consequences of information. Consider a model of Bayesian persuasion, where a finite set of agents agree on an information structure that generates and allocates a bargaining surplus relative to some default information structure. We first characterize the existence of an agreement that is beneficial for all agents whenever the default information structure is discrete; that is, it induces beliefs on which the receiver takes a unique optimal action.. We further show that a beneficial agreement exists if for every coalition there exists a belief that generate enough total surplus to allocate among the coalition members. We define maximally informative endorsement rules, which inform the receiver which agent to support. There is such a rule that corresponds to the symmetric Nash bargaining solution in symmetric environments. Even in asymmetric environments, there is an endorsement rule that is Pareto efficient among agents. We later discuss some implications of our model in the context of media freedom in autocracies, and political campaigns in multiparty systems.

"Persuasion in a principal-agent model" (with Noémie Cabau), submitted

Abstract: Why do bureaucrats provide biased reports even though governments may realize this? To answer this question, we consider a principal-agent model in which the agent commits to a signal structure that generates messages based on his actions. There are also signals about the agent's performance that he cannot control. The principal designs a payment scheme that depends on both types of signals. Both players are risk-neutral, and the negative payments only enter the agent's payoff (e.g., criminal prosecution or daunting bureaucratic procedures). If the agent provides information, the principal can pay less

to incentivize his effort. However, the agent may benefit because providing information can make punishment less likely. Because of this trade-off, the agent may choose an information structure such that he sometimes receives punishment when he exerts high effort. In real-world terms, a bureaucrat dismantles the reporting institution even if that creates risks of punishment for him. The model applies to a scenario where a bureaucrat must provide reports about his performance and is powerful enough to affect them.

“Minorities in dictatorship and democracy”, available as APSA preprint, revise and resubmit at “Journal of Institutional Economics”.

Abstract: How does the level of democracy in a country affect the government’s treatment of ethnic minorities? I find that, on average, when the largest ethnic group in a society exceeds half of the population, ethnic minorities are treated better in autocracies and full democracies than in semi-democratic countries. The intuition is that under autocracy a leader needs little popular support, and therefore a coalition of several minorities can rule. By contrast, in a semi- democracy, the leader needs the support of more people, so a coalition of small ethnic groups is insufficient; the largest group is enough and no other groups are necessary. Finally, highly democratic countries require broad support, and most ethnic groups get benefits. My model is based on the Baron-Ferejohn bargaining game and my empirical tests use the Ethnic Power Relations dataset.

Work in progress

“Logrolling and the power of single-mindedness” (with Albert Sole Olle and Dimitrios Xefteris).

“Why dictators love elections” (with Daniel Treisman).

Presentations

2023 Hungarian Academy of the Sciences Institute for Economics (Budapest), Oligo Workshop (Padova, presented virtually), University of Graz (Graz), Conference on Economic Design (Girona), GRAPE (Warsaw).

2022 Virtual seminar in information economics (Concordia University, online), Institute for Analytical Sociology (online), Hungarian Academy of the Sciences Institute of Political Science (Budapest), Virtual Formal Theory Seminar (online), Corvinus University in Budapest Institute for Economics seminar (Budapest), Corvinus University in Budapest seminar in Operations Research and Game Theory (Budapest), Nazarbayev University (online), CERGE-EI (Prague).

2021 Nazarbayev University (online), Budapest University of Technology (online), Masaryk University (online), ICSID Conference at the Higher School of Economics (online), Junior scholars’ formal theory symposium (online), Conference for Young Scientists in Mathematical Economics and Economic Theory (Saint Petersburg), Quantitative Methods in Governance (Budapest).

2020 Bar-Ilan University Ph.D. workshop (Ramat-Gan), Higher School of Economics International Center for Economics and Finance (Moscow, online), Higher School of Economics Game Theory Lab Seminar (Saint Petersburg, online), April Conference at the Higher School of Economics (online), Kyiv School of Economics (online), University of California, Irvine Ph.D. workshop (online), Higher School of Economics (Saint Petersburg, online), Johannes Kepler University Linz (online), Conference on Mechanism and Institution Design (online), European University (Saint Petersburg, online), American Political Science Association (online), APSA Virtual Formal Theory Seminar (online)

2019 Moscow State University, Higher School of Economics (Moscow), Higher School of Economics (Saint Petersburg), International Meeting on Game Theory (Saint Petersburg), Conference on Economic Design (Budapest), Proseminar in Economic Theory at the University of California, Los Angeles.

2018 Midwest Political Science Association (Chicago).

Workshop Participation

2021 Machine learning mini-course, Hungarian Academy of the Sciences.

2020 Dynamics and Information Workshop, Tel Aviv University.

2017 28th Summer School in Economic Theory, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Honors and Awards

2020 Hayek Fund for Scholars.

2018-2019 Conference travel grants, UCLA.

2017-2019 Institute of Humane Studies Ph.D. Fellowship

2016 Institute of Humane Studies Ph.D. Scholarship, Graduate Dean Scholarship at UCLA

2011 All-Russian Olympiad in Economics, 2nd degree diploma, HSE Olympiad in Economics, 1st degree diploma.

Service

2022 Seminar organizer, QSMS research group.

2020 Referee for the American Journal of Political Science.

2017 Helped to conduct a survey of participants at the Women's March in Los Angeles.

Programming skills

STATA, Mathematica, Python