

Renold (Ren) C. Mueller

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RESEARCH AGENDAS

1. Accountability and agency: how do institutions enable or inhibit selecting good leaders or encouraging welfare-enhancing choices?
2. Congress, parties, and polarization: how do parties help or hinder accountability? How does accountability work in legislatures?
3. Quantitative methods: interested in approaches which are model-driven (e.g. structural or Bayesian) as well as those which have nice robustness properties, and especially interested in ways to balance both objectives.
4. Information economics: broadly interested in models of learning.

EDUCATION

M.A. Politics. Princeton University, Princeton NJ. 2024

B.S. Mathematics. Michigan State University, East Lansing. 2022

B.A. Political Science. Michigan State University, East Lansing. 2022

Projects:

- Incorporating prior information in spatial voting models: extension of Clinton and Meirowitz (2004) (final project from POL 574)
 - I replicate and extend Clinton and Meirowitz’s (2004) study of the Compromise of 1790 using Bayesian Hamiltonian Monte Carlo. I estimate a hierarchical model in which policy preferences in the “assumption” dimension are normally distributed around a transformation of state’s debt, and “residency” about a transformation of state’s latitude. I find support for the premise that states’ interests drove representative’s revealed preferences, but geography was the dominant force, influencing preferences in both dimensions, suggesting that the congress fell into coalitions primarily along North-South divisions.
- Reputational conflict in congress (591 paper)
 - I present a formal model of policy making in which the parties compete over proposal power allocated by an uninformed principal. I find that low type parties in the minority will intentionally block high quality policies from the majority in order to prevent the principal from receiving a positive signal about the majority. This in turn makes both parties’ reputations suffer.
- Estimating the payoffs to political career choices
 - I present and estimate a dynamic discrete choice model of the career choices of politicians. Gathering data politicians from all fifty states including state legislators, congresspeople, and high-level state officials, I use this information to quantify the future electoral returns to early-career choices, e.g. the electoral advantage in congressional elections to winning a state legislative position.

Other academic/work experiences

- Research Assistant. Frances E. Lee. 2023. Did quantitative analysis and created visuals for a book project (with Steve Macedo)
- R consultant. Stokes Library VizHub. 2022–2023. Supported undergraduate students with data analysis, visualization, and general R troubleshooting
- (Starting August 2024) Teaching Assistant. Rocio Titiunik. POL 573, Quantitative Methods II

General Exam Fields (passed 2024):

- Political Economy
- Quantitative Methods

Languages:

- R (advanced)
- Julia (beginner)
- Stan (beginner)
- Matlab (beginner)
- German (rusty)