

THOMAS ROBINSON

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Education

Present **University of Oxford** | DPhil in Politics

2018 **University of Oxford** | MPhil in Politics (Comparative Government)

2016 **University of Oxford** | BA Philosophy, Politics and Economics

Research

Interests

Ideology, representation and democracy | Direct democratic policymaking | Experimental and computational methodology.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

“Multi-modes for Detecting Experimental Measurement Error.” With Raymond Duch, Denise Laroze, and Pablo Beramendi. *Forthcoming in Political Analysis (available on FirstView)*.

Duch, R. M., Laroze, D. , Reinprecht, C. and Robinson, T. S. (2019), Where Will the British Go? And Why?. *Social Science Quarterly*, 100: 480-493.

Under Review

“Populism: Magnet or Deterrent?” With Raymond Duch, Raymond, Denise Laroze, and Constantin Reinprecht. (**R&R at PSRM**).

We implement conjoint experiments in the UK, India, Chile and China to test the effect of nativist policy prescriptions on emigration preferences. We show that whether these policies matter is highly contingent on the subject’s country of origin.

Working Papers

“Applying the MIDAS Touch: A Fast and Scalable Approach to Missing-Data Imputation.” With Ranjit Lall.

We present a new method of multiple imputation using denoising autoencoder neural networks with dropout. MIDAS is highly accurate, scales to long and wide datasets, and can learn dependencies in the data without prior specification.

“Direct democracy in representative systems: Understanding breakdowns in responsiveness through ballot initiative success.”

Why do ballot initiatives succeed in representative democratic systems? I test a series of theories using precinct-level voter returns, individual-level estimates of donors’ ideology, and qualitative evidence from state legislators. I argue that initiatives typically succeed when issues have not been incorporated into the political mainstream.

“Knowledge or ignorance? Assessing the causal effects of campaign finance disclosure on ballot decisions.”

I use a series of conjoint survey experiments on US respondents to show that the effects of disclosure are negligible in the presence of partisan and ideological cues. This is the first paper to test the effects of disclosure across direct democratic and representative institutions.

Work in Progress

“All cluster and no bluster? When should we cluster experimental standard errors?”

Despite their ubiquity in analyses with group-constant variables, the rationale for using standard errors in experimental contexts remains underdeveloped. I show when and why experimentalists should use cluster-robust standard errors, and replicate existing studies to demonstrate the importance of correctly doing so.

“Gender Differences and Development? A Non-Parametric Bayesian Perspective.” With Raymond Duch and Luke Keele.

We use machine learning to re-examine differences in economic behaviour between men and women from a global survey of preferences. We argue that in contexts where preferences are likely to be highly heterogeneous, researchers need to pay close attention to the functional form of their models.

Power analysis for conjoint experiments. With Raymond Duch.

We provide a non-parametric strategy for estimating the necessary sample sizes when conducting conjoint experiments.

Book Reviews

Robinson, T. S. (2018), “Brexit: Why Britain Voted to Leave the European Union by Harold D. Clarke, Matthew Goodwin, and Paul Whiteley.” *Political Science Quarterly*, 133(3): 564-565.

Teaching

Undergraduate	Q-Step 1 quantitative lab sessions, <i>DPIR</i> Practice of Politics (Prelims), <i>St Anne’s College</i> Comparative Government (205), <i>St Anne’s College</i>
Graduate	Introduction to Statistics, <i>DPIR</i>
Methods	Machine Learning, <i>Oxford Spring School in Advanced Research Methods 2020</i> R for Reproducible Research, <i>Oxford Spring School in Advanced Research Methods 2019</i> Heterogeneity and Machine Learning Workshop, <i>CESS/Essex Summer School</i> Introduction to R, <i>CESS/Essex Summer School</i>

Research Assistance

2016 - Present **Centre for Experimental Social Sciences**, Nuffield College
2018 **Professor Andrew Eggers**, Nuffield College
2017-18 **Building Integrity Programme**, Blavatnik School of Government

Presentations & Conferences

2020 PolMeth Europe (upcoming) Poster
2019 “Crashing out of Politics” inequality workshop Convenor + Panel
2019 DPIR Politics Research Colloquium Presenter
2019 CESS Social Media Workshop, Nuffield College Panel
2019 EPSA Annual Conference Panel + Panel Chair
2019 Oxford-LSE Politics Graduate Student Conference Panel
2019 American Politics Graduate Seminar, Rothermere American Institute Presenter
2018 “US Politics after the Midterms”, St Anne’s College Talk
2018 DPhil Politics/IR Seminar, DPIR, University of Oxford Panel
2018 King’s College London JMCE Research Workshop Panel
2018 American Politics Group (PSA) conference Panel
2017 American Politics Group (PSA) conference Panel
2017 Departmental Seminar, Blavatnik School of Government Presenter
2016 Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) Poster
2015 American Politics Graduate Seminar, Rothermere American Institute Presenter

Scholarships, Grants and Awards

2019 Incubator Fund (to host conference, £600) ESRC Grand Union DTP
2019 Academic Programme Fund (to host conference, £1000) Rothermere American Institute
2019 Research Training Support Grant (Experiment, £1600) ESRC Grand Union DTP
2018 Quantitative Graduate Methods Scholarship Q-Step Centre, Oxford
2018 Mr Michell - Wadham RCUK Studentship ESRC/Wadham College
2017 Richard E. Neustadt Essay Prize American Politics Group (PSA)
2016 St Anne’s Centenary Bursary St Anne’s College, Oxford
2016 Travel Grant (MPSA Conference, £400) St Anne’s College, Oxford
2015 Danson Foundation Mentoring Programme St Anne’s College, Oxford
2015 Travel Grant (Fieldwork, £1000) Rothermere American Institute
2014 Scholarship of the University of Oxford (renewed 2015) St Anne’s College

Additional Courses

2018 High-Performance Computing in Economics and the Social Sciences, Oxford
Taught by Prof. Jesús Fernández-Villaverde (UPenn)
2017 Tutorial teacher training, DPIR Oxford

Technical Skills

Coding R, Julia, Python, Bash | Working knowledge of MATLAB and VBA
Typesetting Latex, Markdown
Applications Stata, Qualtrics, Git(hub), Amazon AWS, Adobe Suite, Microsoft Office