

Kyle Coombs

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Department of Economics
Columbia University
New York, New York 10027, USA

518-441-7937
kyle.g.coombs@columbia.edu
<https://kylecoombs.com/>

Placement Chairs

Sandy Black, 212-854-3676, sblack@columbia.edu
Suresh Naidu, 212-854-0027, sn2430@columbia.edu

Placement Assistant

Amy Devine, (212) 854-6881, aed2152@columbia.edu

References

Suresh Naidu (co-sponsor)
Professor
Department of Economics
School of International and Public Affairs
Columbia University
sn2430@columbia.edu
212-854-0027

Miguel Urquiola (co-sponsor)
Professor & Dean of Social Science
Department of Economics
School of International and Public Affairs
Columbia University
msu2101@columbia.edu
212-854-3769

Michael Carlos Best
Assistant Professor
Department of Economics
Columbia University
michael.best@columbia.edu
212-851-9485

Jack Willis
Assistant Professor
Department of Economics
Columbia University
jw3634@columbia.edu
212-851-9485

Education

Columbia University , <i>Ph.D. Candidate in Economics</i>	2017-Present
Expected completion: May 2023	
M.Phil in Economics	2020
M.A. in Economics	2019
Macalester College , <i>B.A. in Economics</i>	2010-2014
Magna Cum Laude	
Departmental Honors	
Robert L. Bunting Prize in Economics	

Fields of Specialization

Applied Microeconomics; Public Economics; Labor Economics

Job Market Paper

“Crowding out crowd support? Substitution between formal and informal insurance”

Abstract: Gifts and loans from friends and family play a largely unstudied informal insurance role in high-income countries, making it difficult to assess their implications for social insurance policy. I present new results on informal insurance paid via person-to-person (P2P) payment platforms using a survey-linked administrative bank transaction dataset covering 130,502 low-income users from the US who experienced at least one unemployment spell between July 2019 and September 2020. Event study estimates show average monthly inflows from all P2P platforms increase by \$30, or 2% of lost earnings, one month after job loss before returning to baseline over 10 months. Single mothers and the long-term unemployed receive the largest increases, as do those living in high-income areas. I leverage three plausibly exogenous changes to federal pandemic unemployment insurance (UI) policy to estimate that UI benefits crowd out at most \$0.04 of informal P2P transfers. Using the social insurance framework introduced in Chetty and Saez (2010), my crowd-out estimates indicate negligible welfare consequences for an additional dollar of benefits. Altogether these results imply that public UI benefits raise welfare by pooling risk across networks without reducing within-network targeting of informal insurance.

Publications

“Early Withdrawal of Pandemic Unemployment Insurance: Effects on Earnings, Employment and Consumption”

(w/ Arindrajit Dube, Calvin Jahnke, Raymond Kluender, Suresh Naidu, & Michael Stepner) *Published: AEA Papers and Proceedings*

Abstract: We examine the effects of the sudden withdrawal of expanded pandemic unemployment benefits in June 2021 using anonymized bank transaction data for 16,253 individuals receiving unemployment insurance (UI) in April 2021. Comparing the difference-in-differences between states withdrawing and retaining expanded UI, we find that UI receipt falls 36.3 p.p., while employment rises by only 6.8 p.p. by early September. Average cumulative UI benefits fall by \$2,529, while average cumulative earnings increase by only \$292. Heterogeneity by unemployment duration implies that these effects are primarily driven by extensive margin expiration of benefits rather than by intensive margin reductions in the benefit level.

Working Papers

“Effects of Pandemic Unemployment Policies on Consumption, Savings, and Incomes of Workers: Evidence from Linked Survey-Transactions Data” (w/ Arindrajit Dube, Calvin Jahnke, Raymond Kluender, Suresh Naidu, & Michael Stepner)

Abstract: We present new results on the consumption, savings, and income effects of the introduction of the unusually generous unemployment insurance benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic in April, their abrupt expiration at the end of July, and their short-term partial reintroduction through August and September. We use a new dataset of administrative bank account balances and transactions 1.2 million workers and 258,065 recipients of UI. We link these administrative data with a large-scale survey ($N = 24,671$) of expectations and economic preferences. We find that account outflows fell by 20% among July UI recipients in the 12 weeks since expiration relative to non-recipients. We find that consumption drops around expiration were muted owing to accumulated savings out of the expanded UI over the March-July period; end of July savings were roughly three times as large as savings in January. The magnitude of the drop in savings following the expiration was larger in households with low expectations of continuing benefits, no children, low risk aversion, and high discount rates. We also find that the temporary Lost Wages Assistance program provided a small but temporary boost to savings and consumption, and the timing of this boost varied based on the staggered adoption by states.

“Scandal-driven Catholic school closures and charter school response: Dynamics of competition for educational services”

Short Abstract: Find charter schools filled gaps in the education market as private Catholic schools close using event studies around the announcement of abuse scandals within Catholic churches, suggesting these schools are responsive to competition.

In Progress

“Charitable Contributions and the Federal Government” (with Michael Best & Daniel Rogger)

Short Abstract: We exploit plausibly exogenous turnover of the Senate Finance Committee chair to instrument changes in state-level federal spending as they relate to charitable giving.

“The Price of Politics: How much are evangelical Presbyterians willing to pay to separate?”

Short Abstract: Proxy for the value of social policy using variation in the amounts that conservative-learning Presbyterian Churches paid to fulfill a Property Trust Clause and sever ties with the Presbyterian Church (USA) after the denomination voted to allow ordination and marriages of LGBTQ+ individuals.

“Best responses to banning the box? Extensive Labor Supply Responses to Statistical Discrimination”

Short Abstract: Leverage staggered roll out of Ban-The-Box (BTB) laws to analyze job search strategies among the unemployed by race. Early results suggest non-hispanic black men are more likely to apply for jobs within the public sector after laws are passed.

Presentations

Crowding out crowd support? Measuring substitution between formal and informal insurance

LACDev Conference, September 2022 *Wellesley College*

Early Withdrawal of Pandemic Unemployment Insurance: Effects on Earnings, Employment and Consumption

AEA Papers & Proceedings Equity And Efficiency In Unemployment Insurance, January 2022 *Online*

Effects of Pandemic Unemployment Policies on Consumption, Savings, and Incomes of Workers: Evidence from Linked Survey-Transactions Data

Innovative Data in Household Finance: Opportunities and Challenges, December 2020 *Online*

Research Positions

Associate, Opportunity Insights

Spring 2020-Present

Research Assistant, Columbia University for Suresh Naidu

Spring 2020-Present

Research Assistant, Columbia University for Eric Verhoogen

Fall 2018-Spring 2020

Research Assistant, Federal Reserve Board

2015-2017

Teaching Experience

Columbia University

Instructor of Record, *Public Economics*, solo-taught

Summer 2022

Data Teaching Fellow, *All Senior Seminars* with Michael Best & Susan Elmes

Fall 2021-Spring 2022

Teaching Assistant, *Perspectives of Economics* with Suresh Naidu & Joseph Stiglitz

Spring 2021

Teaching Assistant, *The Economics of Race in the United States* with Brendan O’Flaherty

Fall 2020

Federal Reserve Board, joint with Howard University

Teaching Assistant, *Data Analysis and Financial Literacy in R* with William Ampeh & Andrew Cohen

Spring 2017

Macalester College

Teaching Assistant: *Principles of Economics* with Amy Damon
Supplemental Instructor, Macalester College: *Intermediate Microeconomics* with Sarah West

Fall 2014
Spring 2013

Advising

Honors Thesis Committee Member for Nicholas Di, Macalester College

Fall 2021-Spring 2022

Academic Service

Journal Referee

American Economic Review: Insights
Economic Inquiry

Columbia University

Coordinator & Mentor, Economics Diversity Initiative Undergraduate Mentoring Program
President & 2nd-Year Representative, Association of Graduate Economics Students (AGES)
Coordinator & Mentor, AGES First-Year Mentoring Program

2020-Present
2018-2020
2018-2021

Miscellaneous

Nationality: United States

Human Languages: English (Native), Spanish (Fluent), Portuguese (Proficient), Quechua (Basic), French (Basic)

Programming Languages: R, Python, Stata, Mathematica, SAS, SPSS, MATLAB

Other skills/hobbies: Audiovisual production and video editing, game design, piano, guitar, voice (tenor)