

JOHANNES CASTNER

PERSONAL INFORMATION

address 604 W 115th Street Apt. 1B, New York, NY 10025
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EDUCATION

2009-2015
(expected) Columbia University

*PhD. Sustainable
Development*

Thesis: *Collective Cognition: Group Think and Crises*.
Advisors: · Ernesto REUBEN · Scott PAGE · Rajiv SETHI
Abstract: My dissertation is concerned with belief dynamics in groups, or “cognitive ecology”; theoretically, as well as experimentally. I show that cognitive diversity—for which I develop and motivate a mathematical measure—arises from the complexity of the system that people seek to understand. Next, I show both theoretically and in a laboratory experiment that conditional on the system of interest taking on some level of structural complexity, increased cognitive diversity helps collectives to make more robust decisions. In the process of formulating my questions, I make two methodological advances for the economics literature on heterogenous priors. First I introduce Bayes Nets as formal representations of causal beliefs and second, I present a general purpose platform for conducting online and laboratory experiments to study belief dynamics in groups:
bettingsbelieving.com.

2004-2007 Columbia University

*B.A. Economics
and Cultural
Anthropology*

magna cum laude · School of General Studies.

WORKING PAPERS

1. Castner, J. (2014). [Measures of Cognitive Distance and Diversity](#).
2. Castner, J., M. Dumas and P. Gočev (2012). [Causal Inference with Spatially Disaggregated Data: Some Potentials and Limits](#).

WORK IN PROGRESS

1. Castner, J. and T. Li (2015, expected). Collective Cognition, Group Think and Crises in Laboratory Experiments.
2. Castner, J. (2015 expected). A Theory of Cognitive Diversification in Complex Systems.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Co-Instructor

Spring 2013 · Columbia University
Complexity Science
Co-Instructors: · Upmanu LALL · Marion DUMAS · James RISING

Teaching Assistant

Fall 2014 · Columbia University

Research Methods and Quantitative Techniques in Public Management and Policy

Instructor: · Dong GUO

Spring 2011 · Columbia University
Challenges of Sustainable Development (Undergraduate)
Instructor: · Jeffrey SACHS

Fall 2010 · Columbia University
Introduction to Development Practice
Instructors: · Jose OCAMPO · Akbar NOMAN

WORK EXPERIENCE

2007–2009 THE FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF BOSTON

Research Assistant

Developed statistical software for STATA.

Reference: Christopher FOOTE · + 1 (617) 973 3077 · Chris.Foote@bos.frb.org

2010–2011 THE EARTH INSTITUTE

Research Assistant

Household study of Indoor Air Pollution in Kenya.

Reference: Alexander PFAFF · alex.pfaff@duke.edu

OTHER INFORMATION

Awards

2011-2014 · National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship (GRF)

2010 · Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund (SYLFF) Grant

2009 · Columbia University Graduate Student Faculty Fellowship

2005-2007 · Golden Key International Honors Society

2005-2007 · Joseph and Norma Preziosi Endowed Scholarship

2005-2006 · North Jersey Media Group Scholarship

Workshops and Summer Schools

June 2012 and 2013 · Santa Fe Institute
Advanced Graduate Workshop in Computational Social Science
Core Faculty: John MILLER · Scott PAGE

September 2012 · Courant Research Center (Göttingen, Germany)
Social Structure Summer School
Core Faculty: Jan NAGLER · Jeffrey STEVENS · Gabriele SCHINO

June 2011 · Santa Fe Institute
Graduate Workshop in Computational Social Science
Core Faculty: John MILLER · Scott PAGE

September 2010 · Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (Amman, Jordan)
Capability and Multidimensional Poverty Graduate Summer School
Core Faculty: Sabina ALKIRE

Languages

GERMAN · Mother tongue, ENGLISH · Fluent, FRENCH · Basic (work in progress)

Computer Languages

PYTHON, JAVASCRIPT · Mother tongue, R, HTML · Fluent, MATLAB, MATHEMATICA, PEARL · Basic

November 28, 2014