
CURRICULUM VITAE

JEREMY M. BURKE

ADDRESS

Department of Economics
Duke University
Box 90097
Durham, NC 27708-0097

E-MAIL jmb11@duke.edu

WEBPAGE www.econ.duke.edu/~jmb11

HOME

408 Presque Isle Lane
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
Cell: (919) 452-7950

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Economics (expected May 2008), Duke University, Durham, NC, USA

B.A. in Economics and Mathematics, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, USA
May 2001

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Primary Fields: Microeconomic Theory

Secondary Fields: Political Economy, Industrial Organization

DISSERTATION

Title: Essays on the Acquisition, Provision and Manipulation of Political and Economic Information

Committee: Curtis Taylor (chair), Huseyin Yildirim, Tracy Lewis, Michael Munger

PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

2003~2007 Department of Economics, Duke University, Durham, USA

- Instructor, Game Theory (ECON 207S, fall 2007)
- Research Assistant, Curtis Taylor (summer 2005 to fall 2006)
- Instructor, Ph.D. Qualifier Camp (summer 2005)
- Teaching Assistant, Graduate Microeconomics (fall 2004, spring 2005)
- Teaching Assistant, Ph.D. Math Camp (summer 2004)

2002~2003 Custer, Williams and Company

- Analyst

2001~2002 IMake Consulting

- Financial Analyst

WORKING PAPERS

1. "Unfairly Balanced: Unbiased News Coverage and Information Loss", Fall 2007, Job Market Paper

2. "Primetime Spin: Media Bias and Belief Confirming Information", Spring 2007, revising for resubmission to *Journal of Economics and Management Strategy*

3. "What's in a Poll? Incentives for Truthful Reporting in Pre-Election Opinion Surveys", Spring 2007, with Curtis Taylor, revising for resubmission to *Public Choice*

ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL HONORS and AWARDS

Graduate School Summer Fellowship, Duke University: Summer 2007

PARISS Fellowship, Social Science Research Institute, Duke University: Fall 2006 - Spring 2007

Conference Travel Fellowship, Duke University: Spring 2007, Fall 2007

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 2007

Econometric Society North American Summer Meeting, June 2007

Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, April 2007

Social Sciences Research Institute, Duke University, May 2007

REFEREEING

The B.E. Journal of Theoretical Economics, Public Choice (2)

SKILLS and OTHER INFORMATION

Computer Skills: MATLAB, Mathematica, LaTeX, MS-Word, MS-Excel

REFERENCES

Curtis Taylor, Professor of Economics, Duke University
Box 90097, Durham NC 27708-0097
phone: (919) 660-1827, email: crtaylor@econ.duke.edu

Huseyin Yildirim, Associate Professor of Economics, Duke University
Box 90097, Durham NC 27708-0097
phone: (919) 660-1805, email: yildirh@econ.duke.edu

Tracy Lewis, Martin L. Black, Jr. Professor of Business Administration, Duke University
1 Towerview Drive, Durham NC 27708
phone: (919) 660-7983, email: tracyl@duke.edu

Michael Munger, Professor of Political Science and Professor of Economics, Duke University
Box 90204, Durham NC 27708
phone: (919) 660-4300, email: michael.munger@duke.edu

DISSERTATION SYNOPSIS

My dissertation is focused on the acquisition, provision, and manipulation of information in political and economic contexts. In a series of three papers, I examine the incentives for both news producers and consumers to provide and gather biased information. While this behavior often leads to distortions resulting in information loss, the acquisition of biased news may actually improve consumers' decisions.

“What’s in a Poll? Incentives for Truthful Reporting in Pre-Election Opinion Surveys” The first chapter of my dissertation, which is joint work with Curtis Taylor, examines the ability of pre-election polls to aggregate information about voters' political preferences. We show that if the electorate is large or if voting costs are significant, then poll respondents have an incentive to misreport their preferences in order to influence the probability other citizens turnout to vote. Our results suggest that polling data should be interpreted with caution as pre-election polls are often subject to manipulation at both the individual and institutional level.

“Primetime Spin: Media Bias and Belief Confirming Information” The news media plays an important role in forming people's political opinions. However, the public's preferences can also influence what type of information the media provides. In the second chapter of my dissertation, I study the link between preferences and news consumption and production. I show that it can be optimal for people to acquire all their information from a news outlet that is biased towards their prior beliefs. In a dynamic environment, even unbiased consumers may prefer biased news outlets since they can deliver highly informative signals when they produce unexpected reports. The media, recognizing these informational demands, slants its reporting accordingly. I show that competition may not decrease bias, but actually enhance it. However, despite increasing bias, competition can improve welfare by increasing the number of people who watch the news.

“Unfairly Balanced: Unbiased News Coverage and Information Loss” (Job Market Paper) While many people prefer to receive information from an outlet that shares their point of view, the majority of the population still prefers unbiased news sources. This demand for impartial reporting creates a strong incentive for news organizations to present themselves as politically neutral. The last chapter of my dissertation argues that the desire to appear unbiased can lead to information loss. News firms have an incentive to suppress information in order to appear impartial. I show that information loss can be exacerbated by competition, policies that regulate content can reduce welfare, while limiting the size of the market can increase the amount of information consumers receive. Additionally, the introduction of imperfectly informed sources of news, such as blogs, can decrease the incentives for traditional news outlets to provide controversial information, yet they can also improve the public's knowledge when a lot of information is being suppressed.