SERA LINARDI

School of Public and International Affairs
University of Pittsburgh
230 S. Bouquet Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

linardi@pitt.edu
(626) 264-0367
https://www.spia.pitt.edu/people/sera-linardi
http://caasi.pitt.edu/

RESEARCH FOCUS

I design and study participatory institutions that translate community knowledge into learning, research, and public action. Using experimental economics, behavioral science, and civic data science, I examine how institutional structures shape participation and knowledge translation within public systems—particularly how individuals express prosociality and rebuild agency under real-world constraints.

EMPLOYMENT

- Associate Professor with tenure, University of Pittsburgh, 2018-current (on leave 2024-2025)
- Assistant Professor, University of Pittsburgh, 2010-2018 (on leave 2012-2013)
- Computer Scientist, Adobe Systems Inc., 1999-2004

OTHER ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Leader, Participatory Knowledge Systems project, Hub for AI and Data Science Leadership (HAIL@Pitt), Office of the Provost, 2025-2028
- Inaugural Executive Director, ACM Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization (EAAMO), 2024-2025
  - 3000+ members across 150 institutions in computer science, operations research, economics
  - Research community to integrate the perspectives and interests of marginalized groups at the foundation of algorithmic and resource allocation systems.
- Siegel PiTech (Public Interest Technology) Faculty Impact Fellow, Cornell Tech, 2024
- Founding Director, Center for Analytical Approaches to Social Innovation (CAASI), 2019-2025
  - Multidisciplinary hub serving 240+ student researchers and 8+ community partners across social justice, civic technology, and economic opportunity initiatives
  - Empirical testbed for institutional design and knowledge translation research
- Affiliated Faculty, Behavioral Economics Design Initiative, 2022-present
- Associate Professor, Intelligent Systems, School of Computing and Information, 2018-2024
- Affiliated Faculty, Department of Economics, 2010-present
- Affiliated Faculty, Pittsburgh Experimental Economics Laboratory (PEEL), 2010-present

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. in Social Science, California Institute of Technology, 2010
- B.S., Computer Science, Stanford University, 1999

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles (Peer-Reviewed)

1. "Approximately Efficient Resource Allocation: A Theoretical and Experimental Evaluation" with Nicole Immorlica, Brendan Lucier, Joshua Mollner, and Robizon Khubulashvili. *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* (forthcoming) (IF 2.6)

2. "Preparing Social Work Students to Work with Public Interest Technology: An Interdisciplinary Effort" with Soobin Kim and Helen Petracchi. *Journal of Social Work Education* (2026), 1-8 (IF 1.8)
   [Media: inSocialWork podcast]

3. "Evaluating Prospective and Experienced Queues: A Behavioral Investigation" with Jing Luo and Leon Valdes. *Manufacturing & Service Operations Management* (2025), 28(2), 459-478 (IF 5.7)
   [Media: AAAS, Apple Podcast, Phys.org, Feb 2026]

4. "Worker-Firm Relational Contracts in the Time of Shutdowns: Experimental Evidence" with Colin Camerer. *Experimental Economics* (2021), pp. 1-27

5. "Globalization and Altruism Towards the Poor in Developing Countries: An Experimental Study in India" with Nita Rudra. *Comparative Political Studies* (2020), 53(10-11), 1656-1689
   [Recipient: 2020 James Caporaso Award for most outstanding paper published in the journal]

6. "Casual Contact and Ethnic Bias: Experimental Evidence from Afghanistan" with Luke Condra. *Journal of Politics* (2019), 81(3), 1028-1042

7. "Clerics and Scriptures: Experimentally Disentangling the Influence of Religious Authority in Afghanistan" with Luke Condra and Mohammad Isaqzadeh. *British Journal of Political Science* (2017), pp. 1-19
   [Recipient: 2016 Kellogg/Notre Dame Award for MPSA Best Paper in Comparative Politics]

8. "Awareness of Low Self-Control: Theory and Evidence from a Homeless Shelter" with Elif Incekara-Halafir. *Journal of Economic Psychology* (2017), 61, 39-54

9. "Accounting for Noise in the Microfoundation of Information Aggregation." *Games and Economic Behavior* (2017), 101, 334-353

10. "Peer Coordination and Communication Following Disaster Warnings: An Experimental Framework." *Safety Science* (2016), 90, 24-32

11. "Wallflowers: Experimental Evidence of an Aversion to Standing Out" with Daniel Jones. *Management Science* (2014), 60(7), 1757-1771

12. "Competition as a Savings Incentive: A Field Experiment at a Homeless Shelter" with Tomomi Tanaka. *Journal of Economics Behavior and Organization* (2013), 95, 240-251
    [Media: Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Kansas City-Star, Feb 2014, Science Daily, Nov 2013]

13. "No Excuses for Good Behavior: Volunteering and the Social Environment" with Margaret Anne McConnell. *Journal of Public Economics* (2011), 95(5-6), 445-454

14. "Prediction Markets: Alternative Mechanisms for Complex Environments with Few Traders" with PJ Healy, Richard Lowery, and John Ledyard. *Management Science* (2010), 56(11), 1977-1996

Conference Proceedings (Peer-Reviewed)

1. "Technical Veracity Is Not Representational Veracity: Community-Grounded Perturbation for Benchmarking Human-Systems Data" with Francisca Richter, Casey Canfield, and Christine Marlowe. in *Proc. IEEE Int. Conf. Big Data* (IEEE Big Data), Phoenix, AZ, USA, to be published.

2. "Asking the Right Questions: Can Expert-Prompted LLMs Reformulate Legal Queries From Non-Experts?" with Malihe Alihkani, Katherine Atwell, Morgan Gray, Len Rial, and Jaromir Savelka. *Proceedings of the 64th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics* (ACL), 2026

3. "Improving Citizen-initiated Police Reform Efforts through Interactive Design: A Case Study in Allegheny County" with Yongsu Ahn, Eliana Beigel, Noah Braun, Collin Griffin, Blair Mickles, and Emmaline Rial. *Proceedings of the 2nd ACM Conference on Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization* (EAAMO), 2022, pp. 1-10

4. "Project 412Connect: Bridging Students and Communities" with Alex DiChristofano, Michael L. Hamilton, and Mara F. McCloud. *Proceedings of the 1st ACM Conference on Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization* (EAAMO), 2021, pp. 1-12
   [Recipient: 2021 ACM EAAMO New Horizons Award for Bridging Research and Practice]

Working Papers (under review)

1. "Platform Design with Prosocial Participants: Lessons from 412Connect" with Alex DiChristofano, Michael Hamilton, and Qiqi Hao (revision requested by *Operations Research*, IF 3.2)

2. "Use of Reentry Support Services and Recidivism: a Field Experiment Varying Dosage" with Marco Castillo and Ragan Petrie (revision requested by *Journal of Human Resources*, IF 5.2)

3. "How the Visibility of Real-Effort Contribution Impacts Reciprocity" with Robizon Khubulashvili and Xiaohong Wang

Working Papers (inactive)

4. "Student-Led Participatory Design (SLPD) Framework for Sustainable Civic Tech in Higher Education" with Janet Bih

5. "The Price of Religion: An Experiment on the Effect of Religious Prohibitions on Economic Behavior" with Rebecca Morton, Kai Ou, Gumilang Sahadewo, and Xiangdong Qin

6. "Excess Demand in Public Transportation Systems: The case of Pittsburgh's Port Authority" with Tianfang Ma, Robizon Khubulashvili, and Kostas Pelechrinis

7. "How to get-toilet-paper.com? Provision of Information as a Public Good" with Mallory Avery, Kristi Bushman, Robizon Khubulashvili, Alexandros Labrinidis, and Konstantinos Pelechrinis

8. "You Will Hear of Skirmishes and Rumors of Skirmishes: Cell Communication in Proximity to Political Violence" with Daniel Berger and Shankar Kalyanaraman

FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

- Selected as Future Leader of Schools of Public Service, Volcker Alliance 2025 Cohort (2025)
- Appointed Siegel PiTech Faculty Impact Fellow, Cornell Tech (2024)
- Honored with University of Pittsburgh Chancellor's Distinguished Service Award (2023)
- Recognized with XPRIZE Racial Equity Alliance Ideas Competition Award (2022)
- Awarded the University of Pittsburgh Community Engaged Scholarship Forum (CESF) Partnership of Distinction Award (2022)
- Selected as University of Pittsburgh Engaged Scholarship Design Fellow (2021)
- Appointed to American Political Science Association Selection Committee for Best Experimental Political Science Paper Award (2018)
- Honored as Donald M. Goldstein Teacher of the Year, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Pittsburgh (2018)
- Selected as University of Pittsburgh Honor Convocation Faculty Honoree (2017)
- Inducted into inaugural class of Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) NEXT Leadership Development Institute for Public Affairs (2016)
- Selected for inaugural Summer Institute on Field Experiments, University of Chicago (2015)
- Awarded Jeffrey Mora Endowed Faculty Resource Award (2012)
- Honored with SISL Graduate Research Fellowships (2006, 2007, 2009)

GRANTS & RESEARCH FUNDING

Total Research Support: $2.2M (2010-2026, as PI or Co-PI)

National Science Foundation

- NSF Cyber-Physical Systems Award #1739413, "Building a Smart City Economy to Motivate Pro-Social Transportation Behavior," Co-PI (PI: Alexandros Labrinidis, School of Computing and Information), $1,439,999 (2017-2020)
- NSF Hazard SEES Award #1331463, "From Sensors to Tweeters: A Sustainable Sociotechnical Approach for Detecting, Mitigating, and Building Resilience to Hazards," Senior Researcher (PI: Louise Comfort), $2,408,881 (2013-2015)

Foundation & Nonprofit Funding

- Heinz Endowments, "Effects of Raising Wages Among Low Wage Workers: Follow-up," Co-PI (PI: Ray Engel and Jeffrey Shook, School of Social Work), $249,858 (2018-2019)
- Rapoport Foundation, "Utilization of Social Services Among the Previously Incarcerated," PI, $45,000 (2020-2023)
- NYU Abu Dhabi Research Enhancement Fund, "The Price of Religion: Effect of Religion on the Choice between Interest-Based and Profit Sharing Investment," Co-PI (PI: Rebecca Morton), $100,000 (2014-2015)
- Hewlett Foundation Grant, "Volunteering and Image Concerns: Lab and Field Experiments," Co-PI (PI: Margaret McConnell), $10,340 (2006-2008)

University of Pittsburgh Funding

- Learning Resource Development Center (LRDC) Grant, "Leveraging a Role-Based Collaboration Technology to Scaffold Multi-Stakeholder Experiential Learning," CoPI (PI: Erin Walker),

$75,000 (2024)
- Seed Grant, “Creating a Data Science for Social Justice (DS4SJ) ecosystem”, PI, $75,000 (2022-2023)
- Momentum Grant, "Community-centric Building of Digital Infrastructures Against Systemic Oppression: G2A Police Misconduct Complaint Support System," PI, $18,000 (2021-2022)
- Institute for Cyber Law, Policy, and Security (Pitt Cyber) Accelerator Grant, "Developing Digitally Mediated Transparency for Police-Community Relations," PI, $5,000 (2021-2022)
- Integrative Social Science Research Initiative, "The Vulnerability of Social Learning to Digital Disinformation," Co-PI (PI: Michael Colaresi, Department of Political Science), $49,620 (2019-2020)
- Integrative Social Science Research Initiative, "Precarious Work and the Experiences of Frontline Service Workers," Co-PI (PI: Lu-in Wang, School of Law), $50,000 (2019-2022)
- Year of Data and Society Grant, "Developing a Data Science for Social Justice Curriculum," PI, $8,000 (2021-2022)
- Central Research Development Funds, "Encouraging Ex-Inmates to Utilize Social Services and Measuring Its Impact on Recidivism," PI, $16,000 (2017-2019)
- Ford Institute for Human Security Grant, "Machine Learning Approaches for Spatial and Temporal Prediction of Violence," PI, $2,000 (2016-2017)
- Graduate School of Public and International Affairs Faculty Startup Grant, PI, $15,000 (2010-2015)

Other Funding

- National Bureau of Economic Research, NSF/CEME Decentralization Conference Funding, PI, $12,000 (2020-2021)
- California Institute of Technology Grant, "Experiments on Contracting," PI, $7,600 (2017)
- Social and Information Sciences Laboratory (SISL) Research Grant, "Predicting Aggregation in Information Mechanisms," PI, $1,700 (2008)

TEACHING

Core Courses

- Data Visualization in R for Public Policy Capstone (PIA 2096) – 2017-present
- Applied Data Analysis for Public Policy (PIA 700, undergraduate) – 2025-present
- Working with Public Interest Technology and Civic Data (PIA 2250) – 2022, 2023, 2025
- Behavioral Economics and Game Theory (PIA 2202) – 2010-2021
- Intermediate Quantitative Methods (PIA 2023) – 2010-2018
- Microeconomics (PIA 2025) – 2010-2018

Program Development & Innovation

- Organizer, School of Public and International Affairs Data Visualization Showcase (2023, 2018)
- Pittsburgh 2025 Racial Justice Summit, "Powering Progress Through Data" Workshop – trained 8 student data facilitators and conducted community data workshop (2025)
- CAASI Teaching Integration: Coordinated multiple undergraduate and graduate capstone courses to develop social justice data platforms and develop multi-semester experiential learning programs (2020-2025):
  - CS1980 (Computer Science) – 6+ iterations
  - INFOSCI 1740 (Information Science) – 2 iterations
  - PIA 2096 (Capstone) – 3 iterations
  - LIS 2001/2 (Library & Information Science) – 2 iterations

– Fredericks Honors College – 2023-2025
– GSPIA Social Impact Fellow projects – mentor (2023-2025)

- Co-organizer (with Johnson Institute for Responsible Leadership), Nonprofit Workshop Unlocking Data-Driven Success for Nonprofits - 2023
- Tutorial Instructor (with Rayid Ghani/Peter Casey, CMU DSPP), CMU/Pitt Scope-a-thon (Spring 2022)
- Tutorial Instructor, "Provision and Targeting for Vulnerable Populations," 21st ACM Conference on Economics and Computation (EC'20). Co-instructor: Samuel Taggart
- Organizer, Econ+CS: Mechanism Design and Applications CAASI Reading Group (2019)
- Instructor, 2018 Global School of Empirical Research Methods, Medellin, Colombia. Topic: Experimental Methods for Behavioral Science. Co-instructor: Sarah Jacobson

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS & CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP

Research Presentations & Invited Talks (selected, 2020-current)

2026: University of Buffalo, EAAMO Inequality Working Group, Human Rights City Alliance, University of Pittsburgh Global Eyes, Bay Area Behavioral Experimental Economics Workshop, Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration Global Conference (NASPAA), Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) “Getting Started in Community Engaged Policy and Management” webinar.

2025: University of Maryland AI for Social Impact Workshop[1], University of Chicago Advances in Field Experiment (AFE), APPAM: Evaluating Modern Policing, APPAM: Rethinking Reentry Through Policy, Partnership, and Practice, Northeastern Civic AI Summit, University of Southern California Department of Economics, University of Pittsburgh Labor and Development Seminar, Behavioral Economics Design Initiative Health and Wellbeing Conference, Pittsburgh Racial Justice Summit

2024: National Institute of Standards and Technology, 16th Annual Dr. Bernard Cobetto Lecture Series on Contemporary Ethical Issues, Cornell Tech Urban Tech, ACM Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization (EAAMO) in San Luis Potosi, Cornell Tech Digital Life Initiative, Queens College - City University of New York Department of Economics, Georgia State Andrew Young Policy School, HackHarvard, Citizens Committee NYC

2023: NASPAA, APPAM, Smart Cities Connect (SCC) Conference & Expo (keynote panel), Regional Nonprofit Scholar Meeting, ACM EAAMO, AFE (University of Chicago), NSF/ CMU Metro21 Enabling and Sustaining Connected Communities Rooted in Solving Societal Challenges Seminar Series, University of Pittsburgh Community Engaged Scholarship Forum, Urban Affairs Association Annual Meeting (Nashville), DIMACS Workshop on Algorithm and Mechanism Design for Achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Rutgers), NAPA Social Equity Leadership Conference (Kansas City), Science of Philanthropy Initiative (University of Chicago), Pittsburgh Racial Justice Summit

2022: CMU Metro21 Lunch and Learn Speaker Series, Sydney Experimental and Behavioral Research Seminar, CMU Scope-a-thon, Pitt Year of Data and Society Celebration, George Mason University Connecting Humans and Technology Symposium, CMU Data Science for Social Good, ACM Conference on Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization, IndoFocus 2022 (keynote speaker), 1Hood Power Hour.

2021: JHU-LSE Special Online Conference on Experimental Insights from Behavioral Economics on Covid-19, Intelligent System Program Seminar Series, National Bureau of Economic Research Decentralization 2021

[1] Cancelled due to emergency

Research to Practice Module, Oxford Conference on Machine Learning and Economic Inequality (declined due to scheduling), AI for Social Good (AI4SG) symposium (CMU).

2020: Mechanism Design for Social Good (MD4SG) workshop, Caltech Economic Theory Seminar (guest discussant), ACM Economics and Computation (EC) Tutorial (Budapest, July 2020), Marketplace, Algorithm and Design Seminar (Columbia), Harvard Center for Research on Computation and Society (CRCS) AI for Social Impact Seminar

Conference Leadership Roles (Organizer, Program Chair, Moderator)

- Co-Organizer (with Michael Colaresi), Responsible Data Science Principles and Performance Metrics Makerspace (at EAAMO 2025) (80+ attendees, ¼ practitioners)
- Co-General Chair (with Michael Hamilton), 5th ACM Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization (EAAMO) Conference, University of Pittsburgh (150 attendees) (2025)
- Co-Leader (with Tracy Corley), APPAM Communities for Community-Engaged and Participatory Researchers at the APPAM Annual Meetings (2023, 2024, 2025) (30 attendees per meeting)
- Co-Organizer (with Scott Page, Alex Teytelboym, and Robizon Khubulashvili), 50th Anniversary National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) 2021 NSF/CEME Decentralization Conference on Mechanism Design for Vulnerable Population at GSPIA (450 registrants, 209 attendees, 23 countries, 100+ institutions, 38 practitioners)
- Executive Committee Member (with Rediet Abebe, Irene Lo, Ilenin Kondo, Lily Xu, Ana Stoica), ACM EAAMO Conference (2020-2023)
- Co-organizer (with Ryan Shi, Hong Shen , Lei Li, Fei Fang) AAAI-24 Workshop on Public Sector Large Language Models: Algorithmic and Sociotechnical Design (2024)
- Program Chair, ACM Economics and Computation (EC) conference, MD4SG Problem Session (practice-to-research) track (2019)
- Moderator, ACM Economics and Computation (EC) conference, Phoenix (2019)
- Selection Committee Member, American Political Science Association Best Experimental Political Science Paper Award (2018)
- Panel Coordinator, Economics and Psychology track, Social Equity Leadership Conference (2014)
- Panel Coordinator, Allied Social Science Association (ASSA) (2011, 2016)

SERVICE & LEADERSHIP

Academic Governance & Peer Review

- Board of Reviewing Editors, PNAS Nexus (2022-2025)
- Reviewer, National Science Foundation (2014, 2017), Swiss National Science Foundation (2026), MacArthur Fellows Program (2026)
- Referee for 25+ journals including: American Economic Review, American Economic Review: Insights, American Political Science Review, Econometrica, Economic Inquiry, Economic Letters, European Economic Review, Experimental Economics, International Economic Review, Labour Economics, Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics, Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, Journal of Management and Strategy, Journal of Economic Psychology, Journal of Experimental Political Science, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, Journal of Public Economics, Management Science, Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, Organizational Science, PLOS One, Political Science Research and Methods, Review for Economic Design, Review of Economic Studies, Review of Finance, Safety Science, Scandinavian Journal of Economics, the B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis and Policy
- Conference Reviewer: International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media (ICWSM) (2017),

International Conference on Social Computing (SBP-BRiMSF) (2016), Time-sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences (TESS) (2013)
- Selection Committee, American Political Science Association Best Experimental Political Science Paper Award (2018)

Community Partnerships & Public Engagement

- Member, New America Rethink AI Board (2024-2027)
- Member, Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) Center for Shared Prosperity's Center Community Committee (C3) (2021-2024)
- Delegate and Volunteer, Braver Angel National Convention at Philadelphia (2026)

University-Level Service

- Communities of Practice (CoP) Lead, Participatory Knowledge Systems, HAIL@Pitt, Office of the Provost (2025-2028)
- Member, University Center for Social and Urban Research Director Search Committee (2022)
- Member, Year of Data and Society Steering Committee (2021-2022)
- Member, Data Science Task Force (2019)

School & Program Service (GSPIA)

- Faculty Lead, MPA Concentration Reform (2025)
- Committee Member, Kay Shimizu's Promotion Committee (2025)
- Committee Member, Merit Review Committee (2025)
- Committee Member, Visiting Assistant Professor Search Committee (2025)
- Member, Planning and Budgeting Committee (2022)
- Member, MPA Faculty Search Committee (2021)
- Faculty Coordinator, GSPIA-Information Science Joint Degree (2017-2021)
- Member, Faculty Advisory Committee (2020, 2016, 2013)
- Member, PhD Committee (2019)

Mentorship

Current PhD Advising (Chair)
- Ashley Khor, SPIA/GSPIA (dissertation in progress)

Past Postdoctoral Advisees
- Robizon Khubulashvili (now Assistant Professor, University of San Francisco)
- Jinyong Jeong (now Assistant Professor, Liaoning University)

Past PhD Advising (Chair)
- Lucy Gillespie – (Analyst / Manager of Strategic Special Projects, Allegheny County CountyStat
- Xiaohong Wang – (now Assistant Professor, University of South Alabama)

Master's Student Advising & PhD program Placement (Selected)
- Erin Carbone – Carnegie Mellon University (SDS)
- Juan Nicolas Hernandez – Cornell University (Applied Economics)
- Kate Morris – Michigan State University (Political Science)
- Kira Pronin – University of Pittsburgh (Political Science)

• Ziqiao Chen – Syracuse University (Maxwell School of Public Administration)

Past PhD Advising (Committee) – Economics & Social Science
• Department of Economics: Yinxiao Wang, Priyoma Mustafi , Bea Ahumada, Domonkos Vamossy, Mallory Avery, David Klinowski , Gumilang Sahadewo, Rachel Landsman, Daniel Jones, Michael LeGower, Maria Recalde
• Katz School of Business: Gabriel Pensamiento Calderon, Titing Cui, Jing Luo
• Department of Political Science: Minsu Jang, Eun Young Kim
• School of Social Work: Soobin Kim
• School of Education: Aaron Anthony, Yuan Zhang
• GSPIA: Danielle Loustau-Williams
• External: Marcos Gallo (California Institute of Technology, Humanities and Social Science)