

# OMAR WASOW

## CONTACT

*email* · owasow@gmail.com  
*web* · <http://scholar.harvard.edu/owasow>  
*phone* · 917.860.2820

## EDUCATION

9/05-Present  
Ph.D.  
A.M.  
A.M.  
*Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.*  
African and African American Studies. Degree expected in 2012. GPA: 4.0.  
Statistics. Requirements fulfilled in 2011. Degree expected in 2012. GPA: 3.5.  
Government. Requirements fulfilled in 2008. Degree expected in 2012. GPA: 3.8.

9/88-6/92  
A.B.  
*Stanford University, Stanford, CA.*  
Individually Designed Major, Race and Ethnic Relations. GPA: 3.5.

## DISSERTATION

Three papers on the causes and consequences of the 1960s urban riots. The first paper, "What Effect Does Police Response Have on Riot Severity?," codes news and government reports of urban riots to demonstrate that law enforcement behavior is strongly correlated to the severity of incidents of civil unrest. The second paper, "Did the 1960s Urban Riots Reshape American Politics?," demonstrates that the location, timing and severity of urban riots is strongly associated with the county-level vote share for the Democratic party in presidential and congressional elections in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The third paper, "Did Urban Riots Increase Demand for Law and Order Politics?," analyzes longer-run effects of disorders on variation in state-level enactment of tough on crime criminal justice policies in the 1970s and 1980s.

## AWARDS

2010-11  
2010-11  
2008-10  
2007-10  
2007-10  
1997-99  
*Dissertation Fellowship, Project on Justice, Welfare and Economics.*  
*Sheila Biddle Ford Foundation Fellowship, W.E.B. Du Bois Institute.*  
*Henry Crown Fellowship, Aspen Institute.*  
*Graduate Research Fellowship, National Science Foundation.*  
*Humane Studies Fellowship, Institute for Humane Studies.*  
*Next Generation Leadership Fellowship, Rockefeller Foundation.*

## SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

4/23/11  
4/11/10  
10/21/09  
7/30/08  
4/19/08  
*Did Urban Riots Win Nixon the Presidency?* Conference on Political Violence, Yale University, New Haven, CT.  
Selected to present ongoing research on violence and voting.

*Can Tweets Kill a Movie?* The ACM CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems 2010 Microblogging Workshop, Atlanta, GA.  
Selected to present ongoing work on using Twitter to predict box-office performance.

*Education 2.0?* Google, Cambridge, MA.  
Presentation of ongoing work on open-source, computer-based, educational software.

*Three Paradoxes of the Drug Prohibition*, University of Maryland, College Park, MD.  
Presentation of research about drug policy and incarceration rates.

*How Does Police Response Affect Riot Severity?* Yale University, New Haven, CT.  
Conference on Order, Conflict and Violence.

- 2/23/07 *Did the Rise of Crack Cocaine Increase Dropouts?* Harvard University. Cambridge, MA. Harvard Graduate School of Education Conference.
- 2/10/07 *Tavis Smiley Presents: State of the Black Union* Hampton University, VA. Panelist in discussion broadcast live on C-SPAN.
- 4/20/05 *Participatory Media* Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY. Speech on how social media is transforming traditional institutions.
- 10/24/03 *How Multicultural Youth Are Reshaping America* Tri-Caucus Retreat, Asian-American, Black and Hispanic Congressional Caucuses' Annual Gathering, San Juan, PR. Keynote speech to Members of Congress.

#### TEACHING

- 9/08-1/09 *Head Teaching Fellow*, American Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Assisted Prof. Paul Peterson with introductory course on American government. Received Harvard University Certificate of Distinction in Teaching.

#### WORKING PAPERS

- "Did the 1960s Urban Riots Reshape American Politics?"*  
Demonstrates that the location, timing and severity of urban riots is strongly associated with the county-level vote share for the Democratic party in presidential and congressional elections in the late 1960s and early 1970s.
- "Reconciling Race and Causation"* (with Maya Sen)  
Proposes two extensions to the prior literature on causal inference with "immutable characteristics" that reconciles race and causation in some cases.
- "How Are Vitamin D and Race Associated with Mortality?"*  
Analyzes data on individual-level serum 25(OH)D levels in 1988 and incidence of mortality by 2006 to assess associations, by race, of vitamin D deficiency and mortality.
- "Can Tweets Kill A Movie? An Empirical Evaluation of the 'Bruno' Effect"*  
Investigates whether positive nor negative comments on Twitter are associated with changes in box office performance and finds evidence that suggests the volume of tweets provides useful information for predicting opening weekend box office performance.
- "Why Red-light Districts? Prostitution and Municipal State Formation, 1822-1874."*  
Uses cases to address why tolerated zones of lawbreaking were the default solution for regulating prostitution. Also proposes a theory of what factors led different cities to try varied approaches to regulating prostitution.
- "What Effect Does Police Response Have on Urban Riot Severity?"*  
Codes news and government reports of urban riots to demonstrate that law enforcement behavior is strongly correlated to the severity of incidents of civil unrest.
- "Did the Rise of Crack Cocaine Increase Dropouts?"*  
Evaluates the possible association between increases in high school dropouts and an index of the prevalence of crack cocaine in 144 cities between 1980 to 2000.
- "It's Not about Race at K: Analyzing the Evolution of the Black-White Test Score Gap in the First Six Years of School"* (with Elena Llaudet)  
Confirms and extends the results of Fryer & Levitt (2004) demonstrating that the disparity in academic achievement between blacks and whites only begins after students arrive in school, after controlling for a small set of socioeconomic, family and health related characteristics.

#### OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- 1/13/10 "Was Harry Reid Right?" WashingtonPost.com and TheRoot.com.
- 11/5/08 "First Internet President: How Obama tapped netizens to transform American politics." TheRoot.com.

3/11/08 "From Jack Johnson to Eliot Spitzer: The troubling history of the White-Slave Traffic Act." TheRoot.com.

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

7/96-Present *Technology Analyst*, CNN, MSNBC, NBC, NPR, Oprah, PRI, New York, NY.  
On-air commentator on current events and technology.

3/99-8/05 *Executive Director*, BlackPlanet.com, Community Connect Inc., New York, NY.  
Co-founded and managed the leading African American web site. Guided site to profitability and user base of four million users a month. Helped raise \$22 million.

#### SELECTED PROFILES & MEDIA

12/15/10 "World War 3.0?" Discussion of cyberwar on The Colbert Report.

3/10/10 "Tech Guru With a Social Vision," *The Wall Street Journal*, Joe Walker.

11/20/09 "Q&A with Omar Wasow," C-SPAN, host Brian Lamb.

11/27/02 "Entrepreneur Takes Black-Oriented Site Out of Red," *The New York Times*, Linda Richardson.

5/13/01 "Silicon Alley's Philosopher-Prince," *The New York Times*, Lynnley Browning.

#### AFFILIATIONS

9/09-Present Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Science, Graduate Student Affiliate.

1/04-Present Stanford School of Education Advisory Board, Board Member.

6/00-Present Brooklyn Excelsior Charter School, Co-founder and Board Member.

#### SKILLS

Proficient in R statistical platform and LATEX. Limited proficiency in Spanish.