

# Melina Raquel Platas

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New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD)  
Social Science, Bldg. A5-145  
P.O. Box 129188, Abu Dhabi, UAE

## ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Assistant Professor, New York University Abu Dhabi, July 2016–

## EDUCATION

Ph.D. Political Science, Stanford University, 2016

DISSERTATION: *The Religious Roots of Inequality in Africa*

Committee: Jeremy Weinstein (chair), Pascaline Dupas, James Fearon, David Laitin

B.A. Human Biology, Stanford University, 2007

## BOOK

*Culture and Mass Schooling: The Colonial Roots of Educational Inequality in Africa*, accepted for publication at Cambridge University Press

- [Q & A: The Muslim-Christian education gap in sub-Saharan Africa](#), Pew Research Center

## PUBLICATIONS

- [1] Platas, Melina R. 2023. “In Africa, religion predicts educational mobility,” *Nature News and Views*, Vol 618.
- [2] Bauer, Vincent, Melina Platas, and Jeremy Weinstein. 2022. “Legacies of Islamic Rule in Africa: Colonial Responses and Contemporary Development,” *World Development*, Vol. 152, 105750.
- [3] Arce *et al.* 2021. “COVID-19 Vaccine Acceptance and Hesitancy in Low and Middle Income Countries, and Implications for Messaging,” *Nature Medicine*, 27: 13851394
- [4] Feralli, Romain, Guy Grossman, Melina Platas, and Jonathan Rodden. 2021. “Who Registers? Village Networks, Household Dynamics, and Voter Registration in Rural Uganda,” *Comparative Political Studies*, 55(6): 899-932.
- [5] Bicalho, Clara, Melina Platas, and Leah Rosenzweig. 2021 “If we move, it moves with us: Physical Distancing in Africa during COVID-19,” *World Development*, 142: 105379.
  - [“African countries can fight coronavirus better when citizens encourage one another,”](#) *Washington Post*
  - COVID-19 Governance Series: Clara Bicalho, Melina Platas, and Leah Rosenzweig, EGAP
- [6] Platas, Melina and Pia Raffler. 2021. “Closing the Gap: Information and Mass Support in a Dominant Party Regime,” *Journal of Politics*, 8(4): 1619-1634.
  - [“The Effect of Information on Vote Choice and Turnout in Uganda,”](#) EGAP Policy Brief 50.
- [7] Williamson, Scott, Claire Adida, Adeline Lo, Melina Platas, Lauren Prather, and Seth Werfel. 2020. “Family matters: How immigrant histories can promote inclusion,” *American Political Science Review*, 115(2), 686-693.

- “When Americans recall their roots, they open up to immigration,” *The Conversation*
- [8] Blaydes, Lisa, and Melina Platas. 2020. “Religion, Patriarchy and the Perpetuation of Harmful Social Conventions: Explaining Women’s Attitudes toward Female Genital Cutting in Egypt,” *Journal of Demographic Economics*, 86(3): 305-328.
- [9] Eubank, Nicholas, Guy Grossman, Melina Platas, and Jonathan Rodden. 2020. “Viral Voting: Social Networks and Political Participation.” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 16(3), 265-284.
- *Winner of the Political Networks APSA Section Best Article Award, 2022*
- [10] Adida, Claire, Adeline Lo, and Melina R. Platas. 2019. “Americans preferred Syrian refugees who are female, English-speaking, and Christian on the eve of Donald Trumps election,” *PLOS One*, 14(10): e0222504.
- [11] Ferrali, Romain, Guy Grossman, Melina Platas, and Jonathan Rodden. 2019. “It Takes a Village: Peer Effects and Externalities in Technology Adoption.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 64(3), 536-553.
- *Winner of the Political Networks APSA Section Best Paper Award, 2019*
- [12] Dunning, Thad, Guy Grossman, Macartan Humphreys, Susan Hyde, Craig McIntosh, Gareth Nellis, Eric Arias, Clara Bicalho, Taylor C. Boas, Mark T. Buntaine, Simon Chauchard, Anirvan Chowdhury, Jessica Gottlieb, F. Daniel Hidalgo, Marcus Holmlund, Ryan Jablonski, Eric Kramon, Horacio Larreguy, Malte Lierl, John Marshall, Gwyneth McClendon, Marcus A. Melo, Daniel L. Nielson, Paula M. Pickering, Melina R. Platas, Pablo Querubn, Pia Raffler, and Neelanjan Sircar. 2019. “Voter information campaigns and political accountability: Cumulative findings from a pre-registered meta-analysis of coordinated trials,” *Science Advances*, Vol. 5, no. 7, eaaw2612.
- [13] Adida, Claire L., Adeline Lo, and Melina Platas. 2018. “Engendering empathy among Americans can promote inclusionary behavior toward Syrian refugees,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115(38): 9521-9526.
- *Winner of the Migration and Citizenship APSA Section Best Paper Award, 2018*
  - “Imagine yourself as a refugee. Thats what nudges Americans to take action on refugees behalf,” *Washington Post*
- [14] Grossman, Guy, Melina Platas, and Jonathan Rodden. 2018. “Crowdsourcing Accountability: ICT for Service Delivery,” *World Development*, 112: 74-87.
- “Does Information Technology Improve Public Service Delivery?” EGAP Policy Brief 51.
- [15] Adida, Claire L., Kim Yi Dionne, and Melina Platas. 2018. “Ebola, Elections, and Immigration: Experimental Evidence of Disease Threat Shaping Attitudes toward Immigrants,” *Politics, Groups, and Identity*, 8(3), 488-514.
- *Winner of the Politics, Groups, and Identities Best Article Award*
  - “How politicizing an epidemic can shape public attitudes on immigration: Evidence from Ebola in the US,” EGAP Policy Brief 86.
- [16] Lee, Melissa M., and Melina Platas Izama. 2015. “Aid Externalities: Evidence from PEPFAR in Africa,” *World Development*, 67: 281-294.
- [17] Platas Izama, Melina. 2014. “Muslim Education in Africa: Schooling Trends and Attitudes toward Faith-Based Schools,” *Review of Faith and International Affairs*, 12(2): 38-50.

**BOOK  
CHAPTERS**

- [1] Platas, Melina. "Islam and Economic Development in Sub-Saharan Africa." Book chapter prepared for the *Oxford Handbook of Politics in Muslim Societies*, Eds. Melani Cammett and Pauline Jones. Forthcoming.
- [2] Platas, Melina and Pia Raffler. 2019. "Candidate Videos and Vote Choice in Ugandan Parliamentary Elections." *Information, Accountability: A New Method for Cumulative Learning*. Edited by Thad Dunning et al., *Cambridge University Press*.

**WORKING  
PAPERS**

- [1] Adida, Claire, Adeline Lo, Melina Platas, Lauren Prather, and Scott Williamson. "When Hearts Meet Minds: Complementary Effects of Perspective-Getting and Information on Refugee Inclusion."
- [2] Bush, Sarah, and Melina R. Platas. "Who Rates? Identity and Democracy Ratings."
- [3] Platas, Melina R. "Culture and the Persistence of Educational Inequality: Lessons from the Muslim-Christian Education Gap in Africa."

**FELLOWSHIPS,  
GRANTS AND  
AWARDS**

## AWARDS

Winner of the Political Networks APSA Section Best Article Award	2022
Winner of the Politics, Groups, and Identities Best Article Award	2020
Winner of the Political Networks APSA Section Best Paper Award	2019
Winner of the Migration and Citizenship APSA Section Best Paper Award	2018
Joshua Lederberg Award for Academic Excellence in Human Biology, Stanford	2007
J.E. Wallace Award for Scholastic Achievement, Stanford	2007
Elected to Phi Beta Kappa	2006

## FELLOWSHIPS

Graduate Public Service Fellowship, Stanford	2014-2015
Gerald L. Lieberman Fellowship, Stanford	2013-2014
APSA Africa Workshop Fellow	2013
Fulbright Fellowship, Uganda	2008-2009

## GRANTS

Research Enhancement Fund (\$30,000), NYU Abu Dhabi	2021
Research Enhancement Fund (\$26,000), NYU Abu Dhabi	2019
International Republican Institute (\$20,000), with Pia Raffler	2015
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (\$10,000), with Pia Raffler	2015
NSF RAPID (\$50,000), with Claire Adida and Kim Yi Dionne	2014
Global Development and Poverty (GDP) exploratory project (\$49,950), Stanford, with Jonathan Rodden	2014
Experiments in Governance and Politics Regranting Initiative (\$341,958), with Pia Raffler	2014
Entrepreneurship & Innovation in Developing Economies (\$5,597), Stanford	2014
FSI Student Research Grant (\$6,000), Stanford	2014
USAID Democracy, Rights, Governance – Learning, Evaluation, Research (\$83,958), with Guy Grossman and Jonathan Rodden	2013
O’Bie Shultz Travel Grant (\$3,000), Stanford	2013
FSI Global Underdevelopment Action Fund (\$38,500), Stanford, with Lisa Blaydes	2012-2013
Abbasi Program Student Grant (\$5,000), Stanford	2012
Center for African Studies Graduate Research Grant (\$3,500), Stanford	2011

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

Reviewer: *Nature*, *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *World Development*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *World Politics*, *Journal of Comparative Economics*, *Political Behavior*, *British Medical Journal*, *Global Health*, *Sociology of Religion*, *European Political Science Review*, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, *Journal of East African Studies*, *Open Economics*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Comparative Politics*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, *Political Opinion Quarterly*, MIT Press, *Research & Politics*, *Politics & Gender*, *Vaccines*, *PLOSOne*, *Nature Communications*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Governance*, *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, East Africa Social Science Translation (EASST) Collaborative

Member: American Political Science Association (APSA), Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP), Association for Analytical Learning about Islam and Muslim Societies (AALIMS)

COMMITTEE SERVICE

EGAP Climate Change Governance Steering Committee	2021- present
Political Networks Best Conference Paper Award Selection Committee	2021
NYU Abu Dhabi Political Science Search Committee	2019, 2021
EGAP Global South Scholars Selection Committee	2021
EGAP Ethics Committee	2019
APCG Donatioon Fund Committee	2018-2019
Powell Mentoring Award Committee (APSA Comparative Politics section)	2018

**CONFERENCES ORGANIZED**

Climate Governance in Africa, NYU Accra, June 2023  
AALIMS-NYUAD, February 2019  
Working Group in African Political Economy NYU Abu Dhabi, January 2019  
Working Group in African Political Economy NYU Abu Dhabi and EGAP Learning Days, January 2018  
Working Group in African Political Economy NYU Abu Dhabi and EGAP Learning Days, January 2017