

# SERENA F. HAGERTY

*Curriculum Vitae – February 2024*

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## ACADEMIC POSITION

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**University of Virginia, Darden School of Business**  
Assistant Professor, *Marketing*

2022-

## EDUCATION

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### **Harvard Business School**

Ph.D., *Marketing*

James M. and Cathleen D. Stone PhD Scholar in Inequality and Wealth Concentration

### **Harvard College**

B.A., *Psychology* and *Economics*

Graduated with Highest Honors in Psychology

## HONORS AND AWARDS

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American Marketing Association CBSIG Rising Star Award

2021

Rising Scholars Conference

2021

AMA–Sheth Foundation Doctoral Consortium Fellow

2021

## PUBLICATIONS (\*abstract in appendix)

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Collins, Hanne K., **Serena F. Hagerty**, Alison W. Brooks, Jordi Quoidbach, and Michael I. Norton (2022), “Relational Diversity in Social Portfolios Predicts Well-Being,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

**Hagerty, Serena F.**, Kate Barasz, and Michael I. Norton (2022), “Economic Inequality Shapes Judgments of Consumption,” *Journal of Consumer Psychology*.

\***Hagerty, Serena F.**, Bhavya Mohan, and Michael I. Norton (2021), “Whose Pay Should Be Cut in Economic Crises? Consumers Prefer Firms That Prioritize Paying Employees Over CEOs,” *Behavioural Public Policy*.

\*Barasz, Kate and **Serena F. Hagerty** (2021), “Hoping for the Worst? A Paradoxical Preference for Bad News,” *Journal of Consumer Research*.

**Hagerty, Serena F.**, Ryan C. Burke, Linda M. Isbell, Kate Barasz, and Peter Smulowitz (2021), “Patient Perceptions of Diagnostic Certainty at Discharge and Patient Satisfaction in the Emergency Department,” *Academic Emergency Medicine*.

\***Hagerty, Serena F.** and Kate Barasz (2020), “Inequality in Socially Permissible Consumption,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

## SELECTED WORKS IN PROGRESS (\*abstract in appendix)

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\***Hagerty, Serena F.** “Inequality of Opportunity Cost Consideration” *Preparing for submission.*

Levari, David, **Serena F. Hagerty**, and Michael I. Norton, “Replication of Building a Better America—One Wealth Quintile at a Time,” *Working paper.*

\***Hagerty, Serena F.**, Debora V. Thompson and Chris DU PLESSIS, “Zero–Sum Perceptions Reduce Acceptability of Premium Services,” *Data collection in progress.*

Siev, J., Tami Kim, **Serena F. Hagerty**, and Luca Cian. “Preference for Neutrality: When and Why Brands Should Stay Out of Politics” *Data collection in progress.*

Kassirer, S., Julianna Schroeder, and **Serena F. Hagerty.** “When Beggars Can Be Choosers,” *Data collection in progress.*

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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### *Special Sessions:*

“Architecting Choice for Fairness and Inclusion,” Choice Symposium 2023 (INSEAD)

“Marketplace Exclusion of Financially Vulnerable Consumers: Challenges and Solutions,” Association for Consumer Research 2021 (Virtual)

“The Scarcity ‘New Normal’: Scarcity and Income Inequality Post–COVID,” AMA Marketing and Public Policy Conference 2021 (Virtual)

### *Paper Presentations: (\*presenter)*

**Hagerty, Serena F.\*** “Inequality of Opportunity Costs,” Association for Consumer Research 2023 (Seattle, WA)

**Hagerty, Serena F.\*** “Inequality of Opportunity Costs,” Society for Judgment and Decision Making 2023 (San Francisco, CA)

**Hagerty, Serena F.\***, Debora Thompson, and Kate Barasz, “Zero–Sum Perceptions Reduce Acceptability of Premium Services,” Society of Consumer Psychology Boutique Conference 2022 (Honolulu, HI)

**Hagerty, Serena F.\*** and Michael I. Norton, “Inequality and Inefficiency,” Association for Consumer Research 2020 (Virtual)

**Hagerty, Serena F.\*** and Michael I. Norton, “Inequality and Inefficiency,” Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2020 (New Orleans, LA)

**Hagerty, Serena F.\*** and Kate Barasz, “Basic Basic Needs: The (Biased) Belief that Low–Income Consumers Need Less,” Association for Consumer Research 2019 (Atlanta, GA)

Barasz, Kate and **Serena F. Hagerty\***, “Hoping for the Worst: When and why people prefer bad news,” Association for Consumer Research 2019 (Atlanta, GA)

**Hagerty, Serena F.\*** and Michael I. Norton, “Inequality and Market (In)Efficiency,” Association for Consumer Research 2018 (Dallas, TX)

Barasz, Kate\* and **Serena F. Hagerty**, “Hoping for the Worst: When and why people prefer bad news,” Society for Judgment and Decision Making 2015 (Chicago, IL)

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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<b>UVA, Darden School of Business</b> Marketing I- <i>Core Curriculum</i> Marketing and Society - <i>Elective</i>	2022-2024
<b>Harvard Extension School</b> Consumer Behavior	2018

## SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

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Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin Reviewer	2023
Journal of Marketing Reviewer	2023
Journal of the Association for Consumer Research Reviewer	2023
Society for Judgment and Decision Making 2023 Conference Reviewer (San Francisco)	2023
Society for Consumer Psychology 2022 Conference Reviewer (Virtual)	2021
Journal of Consumer Research Trainee Reviewer (with John Deighton)	2020
Society for Judgment and Decision Making Conference Reviewer (Boston, MA)	2019
Behavioral Decision Research in Management Conference Reviewer (Boston, MA)	2018

## SELECTED MEDIA COVERAGE

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- “How to Live Happier in 2023: Diversify Your Social Circle,” *Forbes India*, January 18, 2023  
<https://tinyurl.com/4ctn5k4a>
- “Why Talking to Strangers Is Good for Your Mental Health,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 3, 2023  
<https://tinyurl.com/5yepkr9>
- “Talking to Strangers Might Make You Happier, A Study on 'Relational Diversity' Finds,” *NPR*, October 29, 2022 <https://tinyurl.com/ywanty9z>
- “Tell Me What to Do: When Bad News Is a Big Relief,” *Forbes*, August 16, 2021  
<https://tinyurl.com/4229tk37>
- “What Is an ‘Essential’ Purchase for a Low-Income Family?” *Forbes*, August 26, 2020  
<https://tinyurl.com/yffjxgb8>
- “Why Do We Judge the Decisions of the Poor,” *El Pais*, July 02, 2020 <https://tinyurl.com/yjgwymag>

## INVITED TALKS

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University of California, Los Angeles, Anderson School of Management	2022
Cornell University, SC Johnson College of Business	2021
University of Texas at Austin, McCombs School of Business	2021
University of Toronto, Rotman School of Management	2021
IESE Business School	2021
University of British Columbia, Sauder School of Business	2021
Yale University, Yale School of Management	2021
University of Virginia, Darden Business School	2021
Cambridge Judge Business School	2021
Columbia Business School	2021

**Hagerty, Serena F. and Kate Barasz (2020), "Inequality in Socially Permissible Consumption," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 117 (25), 14084–14093.**

Lower-income individuals are frequently criticized for their consumption decisions; this research examines why. Eleven preregistered studies document systematic differences in permissible consumption—interpersonal judgments about what is acceptable (or not) for others to consume—such that lower-income individuals' decisions are subject to more negative and restrictive evaluations. Indeed, the same consumption decisions may be deemed less permissible for a lower-income individual than for an individual with higher or unknown income (Studies 1A and 1B), even when purchased with windfall funds. This gap persists among participants from a large, nationally representative sample (Study 2) and when testing a broad array of “everyday” consumption items (Study 3). Additional studies investigate why: The same items are often perceived as less necessary for lower- (versus higher-) income individuals (Studies 4 and 5). Combining both permissibility and perceived necessity, additional studies (Studies 6 and 7) demonstrate a causal link between the two constructs: A purchase decision will be deemed permissible (or not) to the extent that it is perceived as necessary (or not). However, because— for lower-income individuals—fewer items are perceived as necessary, fewer are therefore socially permissible to consume. This finding not only exposes a fraught double standard, but also portends consequential behavioral implications: People prefer to allocate strictly “necessary” items to lower-income recipients (Study 8), even if such items are objectively and subjectively less valuable (Studies 9A and 9B), which may result in an imbalanced and inefficient provision of resources to the poor.

**Barasz, Kate and Serena F. Hagerty (2021), “Hoping for the Worst? A Paradoxical Preference for Bad News,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 48(2), 270-288.**

Nine studies investigate when and why people may paradoxically prefer bad news—e.g., hoping for an objectively worse injury or a higher-risk diagnosis over explicitly better alternatives. Using a combination of field surveys and randomized experiments, the research demonstrates that people may hope for relatively worse (versus better) news in an effort to preemptively avoid subjectively difficult decisions (Studies 1–2). This is because when worse news avoids a choice (Study 3A)—e.g., by “forcing one’s hand” or creating one dominant option that circumvents a fraught decision (Study 3B)—it can relieve the decision-maker’s experience of personal responsibility (Study 3C). However, because not all decisions warrant avoidance, not all decisions will elicit a preference for worse news; fewer people hope for worse news when facing subjectively easier (versus harder) choices (Studies 4A–B). Finally, this preference for worse news is not without consequence and may create perverse incentives for decision-makers, such as the tendency to forgo opportunities for improvement (Studies 5A–B). The work contributes to the literature on decision avoidance and elucidates another strategy people use to circumvent difficult decisions: a propensity to hope for the worst.

**Hagerty, Serena F., Bhavya Mohan, and Michael I. Norton (2021), “Whose Pay Should Be Cut in Economic Crises? Consumers Prefer Firms That Prioritize Paying Employees Over CEOs,” *Behavioural Public Policy*.**

Four experiments examine the impact of a firm deciding to no longer pay salaries for executives versus employees on consumer behavior, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Study 1 explores the effect of announcing either pay cessations or continued pay for either CEO or employees, and shows that firms’ commitment to maintaining employee pay leads to the most positive consumer reactions. Study 2 examines the effects of simultaneously announcing employee and CEO pay cessations: consumers respond most positively to firms prioritizing employee pay, regardless of their strategy for CEO pay. Moreover, these positive perceptions are mediated by perceptions of financial pain to employees, more than perceptions of CEO-to-worker pay ratio fairness. Study 3, using an incentive-compatible design, shows that firms’ commitment to paying employees their full wages matters more to

consumers than cuts to executive pay, even when those executive pay cuts lead to a lower CEO-to-worker pay ratio. Study 4 tests our account in a non-COVID-19 context, and shows that consumers continue to react favorably to firms that maintain employee pay, but when loss is less salient, consumers prioritize cutting CEO pay and lowering the CEO-to-worker pay ratio. We discuss the implications of our results for firms and policy-makers during economic crises.

**Hagerty, Serena F., Debora V. Thompson, and Chris DU PLESSIS, “Zero–Sum Perceptions Reduce Acceptability of Premium Services,” *Working Paper***

Many firms offer premium services that provide ease, expedience, and access to those who can afford them, with clear benefits to the individuals who use them and the firms that profit from them. However, these services are not met with universal acceptance. As this research documents, people hold lay beliefs that when firms introduce such premium services, non-premium consumers (e.g., those who buy basic services) are made worse off; ten studies demonstrate how these zero-sum perceptions affect the perceived acceptability of premium services. Importantly, zero-sum perceptions appear unique to vertical extensions of a firm’s customer base (e.g., introducing a premium tier); comparable horizontal extensions (e.g., broadening the base of existing consumers) are not met with the same scrutiny. Contributing to norm violation literature, these studies show that, in addition to provoking more negative moral judgments, zero-sum perceptions of premium services may lead to more negative attitudes towards a firm, and, ultimately, diminished consumer demand.

**Hagerty, Serena F., “Inequality of Opportunity Cost Consideration,” *Working Paper***

Lower-income individuals are often subject to harsher evaluations of their consumption decisions relative to their higher-income peers. This research investigates a novel mechanism for systematically negative judgments of lower-income individuals’ purchase decisions. Five studies demonstrate that individuals are more likely to spontaneously consider the opportunity costs of a purchase made by a lower-(vs. higher-) income consumer, and therefore perceive the same purchase as less of a necessity and as less permissible. Study 1 shows that individuals are more likely to spontaneously consider opportunity costs when observing a purchase made by a lower-income consumer (vs. a higher-income or unknown income control). Study 2 finds that even when prompted to generate opportunity costs, individuals generate systematically different alternatives for lower-income consumers than for higher-income or no-income control consumers. Consequently, Study 3 demonstrates that the same item is perceived as less of a necessity, and therefore less permissible, when purchased by a lower-income consumer because opportunity costs are more salient to the observer. Importantly these effects emerge for both hedonic (e.g., a TV) and utilitarian items (e.g., a vacuum or toaster). However, when opportunity costs are less salient, the effect of income on perceived necessity is mitigated (Study 4). Finally, Study 5 demonstrates that reducing opportunity costs salience—such as by narrowing the use of funds—mitigates the income gap in consumption permissibility.