



## **Experimental Social Science Workshop**

### **Grimond Building, University of Kent, 9-10 September 2021**

#### **Programme Structure**

##### **DAY 1: Thursday 9 September (in-person presentations)**

12.10-12.50: Arrival, registration, coffee and snacks

12.50-13.00: Opening remarks

13.00-14.00: Session 1A and Session 1B

Coffee Break

14.10-15.40: Session 2A and Session 2B

Coffee Break

16.10-17.10: keynote talk by Imran Rasul (UCL) "Pro-Poor Transfers and Economic Preferences of the Rich and Poor: Evidence from a Four Year Partial Population Experiment"

Coffee Break

17.20-18.20: Session 3A and Session 3B

19.00: drinks, followed by workshop dinner

##### **DAY 2: Friday 10 September (online presentations and in-person day activities)**

9.55-10.30: Welcome back Coffee (in-person)

10.30-11.00: Patrick Nolen online session (talks by Alison Booth and Simon Weidenholzer)

Coffee Break

11.10-12.10: (online) Session 4A and Session 4B

12.10-13.30: Lunch and walk in campus and Crab and Winkle Way

13.30-15.00: (online) Session 5A and Session 5B

END

In Memory of Patrick Nolen and Odile Poulsen

## Papers by Session

### Session 1A

The effects of emergency government cash transfers on beliefs and behaviours during the COVID pandemic: Evidence from Brazil (Fernanda Leite Lopez de Leon, ECO-Kent)

Engagement, expertise, and responsiveness to behavioral biases in public organizations: Evidence from the World Bank (Sheheryar Banuri, ECO- UEA)

### Session 1B

Measuring Individual Preferences for Truth-Telling (Lisa Spantig, ECO – Essex)

Proud to belong: The impact of ethics training on police officers in Ghana (Oana Borcan, ECO – UEA)

### Session 2A

A vicious circle: deportability and crime in the Jamaican diaspora (Anna Waldstein, SAC – Kent)

Tracking developmental differences in real-world social attention across adolescence, young adulthood and older adulthood (Heather Ferguson, PSY – Kent)

Irrational Statistical Discrimination (Friederike Mengel, ECO – Essex)

### Session 2B

Credibility in Second-Price Auctions: An Experimental Test (Ahrash Dianat, ECO – Essex)

Buyers' limited attention in Hong Kong housing market, (Xiaoyu Xia, ECO – Essex)

Consumer Preferences for Chlorine Washed Chicken and Attitudes to Brexit (Iain Fraser, ECO –Kent)

### Session 3A

Climate Change and Political Participation: Evidence from India (Irma Clots-Figueras, ECO-Kent)

Vox Populi, Vox Dei? How Systemic and Individual Ideological Incongruence shape Democratic Preferences (Miriam Sorace, POLIT – Kent)

### Section 3B

Match length realization and cooperation in indefinitely repeated games (Simon Weidenholzer, ECO- Essex)

Choice Overload and Asymmetric Dominance: Experiment and Theory (Stefania Sitzia and Bob Sugden, ECO- UEA)

### Session 4A

Leadership in a public good game: Does the leader need to be pro-social or just say they are pro-social? (Yidan Chai ,ECO- Kent)

Follow the leader: Using videos to make information on resource revenue management more relevant (Christa Brunnschweiler, ECO-UEA)

Session 4B

Investigating the determinants of consumer engagement (Mengjie Wang, ECO –UEA)

Survey-based experiments in the social sciences using the Understanding Society Innovation Panel (Tarek Al Baghal, ISER – Essex)

Session 5A

The Power of Religion: Islamic Investing in the Lab (Lucia Milena Murgia, ECO- UEA)

Persistent Polarizing Effects of Persuasion: Experimental Evidence from Turkey (Ceren Baysan, ECO -Essex)

Peer effects in subjective expectations of HIV (Mike Hyunhoi Koo, ECO -Kent)

Session 5B

The Effects of Personalized Information Provision on Access to Emergency Government Benefits: Experimental Evidence from India (Zaki Wahhaj, ECO- Kent)

We Can Challenge (Mike Brock, ECO –UEA)

### **Session 1A**

#### **The effects of emergency government cash transfers on beliefs and behaviours during the COVID pandemic: Evidence from Brazil (Fernanda Leite Lopez de Leon, ECO-Kent)**

Abstract: This paper examines the impacts of emergency cash transfers on individuals' behaviour, focussing on the impacts of "Auxilio Emergencial" (AE): a large-scale cash-transfer aimed at low-income individuals in Brazil during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using an online survey conducted during the first peak of the pandemic in 2020, we exploit quasi-experimental variation generated by the cash-transfer programme design to identify causal effects. AE eligibility led to lower working hours, a reduced likelihood of leaving the house to go to work, and a reduced likelihood of contracting COVID-19. It increased perceptions of the risk associated with the coronavirus, but also may have led to an increased credence in the president (who was downplaying these risks) over health specialists and scientists. To separate 'income effects' from 'loyalty effects' caused by the AE aid, we test how financial liquidity affects coronavirus related beliefs. Recent recipients of AE cash transfers were significantly more likely to trust "health experts" above President Bolsonaro, and hold fewer misconceptions about COVID-19. Our results point to the effects of emergency cash transfers in determining individuals' narratives about a pandemic and in enabling social distancing via a decrease in labour supply.

#### **Engagement, expertise, and responsiveness to behavioral biases in public organizations: Evidence from the World Bank (Sheheryar Banuri, ECO- UEA)**

Mistakes made by policy professionals can have devastating consequences. Nevertheless, policy professionals are trusted in these roles due to their expertise: that is, we expect policy professionals to have sufficient expertise in their field to not fall prey to decision-making traps. Banuri, Dercon, and Gauri (2019) document that policy professionals are subject to such biases. What is not well understood, however, is the role of subject matter expertise in mitigating biases. In this paper, we test the hypothesis that policy professionals with greater expertise are less likely to be sensitive to cognitive bias. Using a sample of development policy professionals (employees of the World Bank), and three experiments focusing on different cognitive biases (Outcome bias, Identifiable Victim Effect, Bandwagon Effect), we find that subject matter expertise helps mitigate some of these biases. Implications for policymaking are discussed.

### **Session 1B**

#### **Measuring Individual Preferences for Truth-Telling (Lisa Spantig, ECO – Essex)**

Fraudulent behavior is prevalent in many markets, particularly, when lying at the individual level is not observable. Aggregate data from controlled environments suggest heterogeneous preferences for truth-telling which are determined by the combination of an intrinsic motivation to be honest and the desire to be seen as honest. However, aggregate data do not allow us to understand which truth-telling types (co)exist and how prevalent each type is. Both are crucial for the cost-effective design of institutions. We propose a novel experimental measure of individual preferences for truth-telling that keeps true states of the world unobservable. The key idea of the experiment is not to rely upon actual reports, but to measure participant's intention to i) be dishonest and ii) avoid being seen as dishonest. This allows to identify the importance of both motives at the individual level without knowing whether participants actually

lied. First results suggest systematic heterogeneity in preference types, for whom one or both underlying motives matter. Also, the intention to be dishonest turns out to be predictive of behavior in two incentivized validation tasks. The intention to be seen as honest appears to matter most for participants who have some, but not too strong intentions to be dishonest. Based on these findings, we propose an even simpler version of our measure suited for representative samples allowing for individual-level predictions of behavior in many other domains.

### **Proud to belong: The impact of ethics training on police officers in Ghana (Oana Borcan. ECO – UEA)**

We evaluate the impact of a two-day ethics and integrity training program conducted on a randomly selected sample of traffic police officers operating in the Accra region, in Ghana. The training was specially designed to activate behavioral change by leveraging officers' mission, i.e., their individual identities as members of the police force, and creating a new shared identity of "Agents of Change," aimed at inducing a collective shift in attitudes and behaviors. About one third of all traffic officers who were stationed in the area received the training. Data generated by a survey and an incentivized cheating game conducted by phone 20 months after the training intervention, show that the program significantly lowered officers' propensity to cheat and positively affected their values and beliefs regarding on-the-job unethical behavior.

### **Session 2A**

### **A vicious circle: deportability and crime in the Jamaican diaspora (Anna Waldstein, SAC –Kent)**

The qualitative nature of ethnography makes it especially compatible with studying sensitive topics in 'hard to reach' populations. By engaging in participant observation-taking part in community life as both participant and observer-ethnographers collect qualitative data that includes tacit and embodied knowledge, which may be missed by quantitative approaches. Although ethnographers don't necessarily conduct experimental research with the aim of inferring causal effects, our methods can nonetheless reveal important nuances in causal relationships.

### **Tracking developmental differences in real-world social attention across adolescence, young adulthood and older adulthood (Heather Ferguson, PSY – Kent)**

Detecting and responding appropriately to social information in our environment is a vital first step towards social interaction. I will report a series of well-powered, pre-registered experiments that examined how social attention develops across the lifespan, comparing adolescents (10-19yrs), young (20-40yrs) and older (60-80yrs) adults. Participants were immersed in different social interactions– face-to-face conversation and navigating an environment – and their attention to social and non-social content was recorded using eye-tracking glasses. Results revealed that, compared to young adults, adolescents and older adults attended less to social information (i.e. faces) during face-to-face conversation, and to people when navigating the real-world. We also explore how features of the social context (e.g. groups vs. individual, in-group vs. out-group) influence allocation of attention. Thus, we provide novel evidence that real-world social attention undergoes age-related change, and these developmental differences might be a key mechanism that leads to impaired ToM among adolescents and older adults.

### **Irrational Statistical Discrimination (Friederike Mengel, ECO – Essex)**

Models of statistical discrimination typically assume that employers make rational inference from (education) signals. However, there is a large amount of evidence showing that most people do not update their beliefs rationally. We use a model and two experiments to show that employers who are conservative, in the sense of signal neglect, discriminate more against disadvantaged groups than Bayesian employers. We find that such irrational statistical discrimination deters high-ability workers from disadvantaged groups from pursuing education, further exacerbating initial group inequalities. Excess discrimination caused by employer conservatism is especially important when signals are very informative. Out of the overall hiring gap in our data, around 40% can be attributed to rational statistical discrimination, a further 40% is due to irrational statistical discrimination, and the remaining 20% is unexplained or potentially taste-based.

### **Session 2B**

#### **Credibility in Second-Price Auctions: An Experimental Test (Ahrash Dianat, ECO – Essex)**

We provide the first direct test of how the credibility of an auction format affects bidding behavior and final outcomes. To do so, we conduct a series of laboratory experiments where the role of the seller is played by a human subject who receives the revenue from the auction and who (depending on the treatment) has agency to determine the outcome of the auction. We find that a large majority of bids in the non-credible version of the second-price auction lie between the theoretical benchmarks of the first-price auction and the credible second-price auction. While sellers in the non-credible second-price auction often break the rules of the auction and overcharge the winning bidder, they typically do not maximize revenue. We provide a behavioral explanation for our results based on incorrect beliefs (on the part of bidders) and aversion to rule-breaking (on the part of sellers), which is confirmed by revealed preference tests.

#### **Buyers' limited attention in Hong Kong housing market (Xiaoyu Xia, ECO – Essex)**

In Hong Kong, it was standard practice of the developers and real-estate agents to advertise only the gross area of residential properties, which can be as much as thirty percent larger than the actual living space because gross area includes a share of communal area in the residential project. This practice would create a false impression of the size of a property if buyers have limited attention. In April 2013, a government ruling went into effect which requires all sales brochures of residential properties to provide information of the saleable area. Using data on all private residential property transactions between 2009 and 2017, we evaluate the effect of the new rules by estimating a hedonic model of housing price and comparing the gross-area premium before and after the new rule takes effect. Our findings add direct evidence on consumers' bias and inattention in a high-stake decision setting.

#### **Consumer Preferences for Chlorine Washed Chicken and Attitudes to Brexit (Iain Fraser, ECO –Kent)**

This research employs two alternatively framed but formally equivalent discrete choice experiments that examine consumer preferences regarding chlorine washed chicken. One is framed in a common "purchase format" and the other employs an alternative format that hypothetically endows respondents with a voucher that they can use to redeem a chicken

product, or exchange, in part, for an alternative chicken product or cash. We find that the difference in our estimates is small across the two frames, generating consistent estimates of value regardless of how we implement our choice experiment. Our analysis also differentiates the value estimates by the attitudes expressed by our survey respondents to Brexit. We find that being positively disposed toward Brexit means that respondents are less likely to value chlorine washed chicken negatively. Yet, of equal or greater significance, those respondents who hold positive attitudes with regard to Brexit still value EU food safety standards highly. This suggests that attitudes to Brexit and preferences regarding food do not necessarily align in support of Free Trade Agreements should they require the UK to lower existing food safety and animal welfare standards.

### **Session 3A**

#### **Climate Change and Political Participation: Evidence from India (Irma Clots-Figueras, ECO- Kent)**

In this paper we study the effects of climate change in India, measured by temperature shocks, on political outcomes, such as voter turnout, candidate selection and voting outcomes. We find that high temperatures reduce agricultural productivity, increase voter turnout, reduce the number of candidates, and change both candidate and winner characteristics. High temperatures reduce agricultural incomes in India (Guiteras 2009), and climate change has been projected to reduce farm incomes by 20-25% in un-irrigated areas by the end of the 21st century (Government of India Economic Survey 2017). Hot days also seem to increase mortality (Burgess et al 2017), an effect that seems driven by reduction in agricultural productivity and wages. Farmers may respond in order to mitigate these effects by changing the input mix, or migrating (Aragon et al 2021, Colmer 2020, Gargantuas et al 2020), but both voters and politicians may react to these shocks by changing their decisions. It is joint work with Amrit Amirapu (U Kent) and Juan Pablo Rud (Royal Holloway)

#### **Vox Populi, Vox Dei? How Systemic and Individual Ideological Incongruence shape Democratic Preferences (Miriam Sorace, POLIT – Kent)**

Do failures of political representation drive backlashes against representative democracy in support for popular versions of democracy? While ideological discrepancies between citizens and elected legislators (or parties) is known to negatively affect citizens' satisfaction towards democracy, little attention is paid to the causal link between various forms of ideological incongruence and citizens' preferences for different models of democracy. This study examines whether egocentric and/or socio tropic incongruence cause people to support more popular control over decision-making leveraging both cross-sectional observational evidence from 64 elections (CSES modules 1-5) and an original survey experiment carried out in France. We find that both forms of incongruence cause heightened support for pro-direct democracy parties and preferences, as well as a backlash against representative democracy. This study has significant implications for our understanding of preferences for direct democracy as natural reactions to actual failures of representative democracy.



### **Session 3B**

#### **Choice Overload and Asymmetric Dominance: Experiment and Theory (Stefania Sitzia, ECO- UEA)**

Using a new experimental design, we test whether increases in the size of a person's choice set can reduce the value of the chosen option. Each option is a vase-like 'container' defined by three dimensions; its value is proportional to its capacity. Although value is objective and can in principle be calculated from the information given, subjects are likely to rely on intuitive judgements. Comparing decision quality between small and large choice sets, we find no evidence of choice overload. Subjects seem to choose by making many quick pairwise comparisons, favouring options that dominate others and eliminating dominated ones. We show theoretically that if such choice processes are used, adding options (even bad ones) to a choice set can improve decision quality. This is joint work with Gerardo Infante and Robert Sugden.

#### **Match length realization and cooperation in indefinitely repeated games (Simon Weidenholzer, ECO- Essex)**

Experimental studies of infinitely repeated games typically consist of several indefinitely repeated games ("matches") played in sequence with different partners each time, whereby match length, i.e. the number of stages of each game is randomly determined. Using a large meta data set on indefinitely repeated prisoner's dilemma games (Dal Bó & Fréchette, 2018) we demonstrate that the realized length of early matches has a substantial impact on cooperation rates in subsequent matches. We estimate simple learning models displaying the "power law of practice" and show that participants do learn from match length realization. We then study three cases from the literature where realized match length has a strong impact on treatment comparisons, both in terms of the size and the direction of the treatment effect. These results have important implications for our understanding of how people learn in infinitely repeated games as well as for experimental design.

### **Session 4A**

#### **Leadership in a public good game: Does the leader need to be pro-social or just say they are pro-social? (Yidan Chai ,ECO- Kent)**

In the study, we investigate the leadership in public goods game. Participants' Social Value Orientation (SVO) were elicited and accordingly classified as either pro-social or pro-self. Leaders in the groups have the opportunity to send SVO type message to their followers. Two sessions were conducted, where leaders can lie about their SVO types to followers in one of the treatments but not in another. Therefore, the reliability of messages are different across sessions. We found that there is a positive effect on contributions if leaders have the possibility to lie about their SVO type.

#### **Follow the leader: Using videos to make information on resource revenue management more relevant (Christa Brunnschweiler, ECO-UEA)**

How can citizens be motivated to demand accountability in the management of public revenues? We use a video survey experiment to provide information, and employ role models to provide encouragement and motivation to act. The experiment focused on petroleum revenue management in Ghana and included over 2300 respondents. Providing information significantly increased satisfaction with current revenue management, though treated participants remained dissatisfied on average. We also found increased intention to demand

more accountability through greater debate. The role models had additional effects: they increased the sense that an individual can influence how petroleum revenues are used; the intention to contact media; and to vote differently to ensure better accountability. These changes, however, did not persist: a follow-up survey with 925 respondents 2.5 years later showed few differences between the control and the treated groups. The experiment demonstrates that providing relevant information affects attitudes and planned behaviour in the short term, and that role models give valuable encouragement for behavioural change.

## **Session 4B**

### **Investigating the determinants of consumer engagement (Mengjie Wang, ECO –UEA)**

The extent to which consumers engage with different kinds of decision problems is a topic of serious concern to industry regulators. There is a lot of evidence suggesting that in many markets (e.g. energy, telecoms, financial services) consumers find it hard to maintain interest and motivation when choosing between alternative offers, and that this is an obstacle to competition. However, it seems clear that some consumer decision problems are very engaging. Many people actually enjoy shopping for consumer goods (e.g. clothes, cars, electronic goods) and services (e.g. restaurants, hotels, holidays). We investigate experimentally what makes some consumer search problems more engaging than others.

### **Survey-based experiments in the social sciences using the Understanding Society Innovation Panel (Peter Lynn, ISER – Essex)**

ISER at the University of Essex is responsible for the design and implementation of the Understanding Society Innovation Panel, a mixed-mode longitudinal survey with annual data collection since 2008. Nearly 100 experiments have been successfully mounted on the panel to date, some led by our own team and some designed by external researchers as a result of our annual open competition for proposals. Many experiments concern aspects of survey methodology, but others are in areas such as behavioural economics or psychology. This presentation will give an overview of the panel, which Eastern Arc researchers are encouraged to consider as a vehicle for their own research. Advantages include free data collection and expert support in experimental design from ISER colleagues.

## **Session 5A**

### **The Power of Religion: Islamic Investing in the Lab (Lucia Milena Murgia, ECO- UEA)**

Religiously affiliated mutual funds have recently become a growing corner of the mutual fund industry, where morality and ethics is thought to exert an influence on investors' decisions. These funds are governed by the requirements of Shariah (Islamic) principles which restrict the investible universe. Due to the nature of these funds, which includes firms based on factors other than purely financial, the closest corollary to these are "Socially Responsible" funds, which have been the subject of considerable interest in the literature. While Islamic funds have grown, it is not entirely clear whether investors are drawn to these funds due to their own religious preferences, or differences in risk and returns, and the extent to which religious preferences matter relative to social preferences. This paper fills the gap in the literature, by providing an express linkage between religious preferences (as measured by an incentivized dictator game) and investment in an Islamic Fund. Using a lab experiment in a Muslim majority country (Pakistan), we create two types of funds: a "traditional" fund that generates profits for the investor, and an "Islamic" fund that is identical to the traditional fund in every way, with the exception of a small (1% of profits) donation to an Islamic institute (a local mosque). The

experiment varies risks and returns of the traditional and Islamic funds allowing us to compare the extent to which investors with religious preferences are likely to accept reductions in risks and returns for investing in line with their religious preferences. We find that investment in Islamic funds is driven by religious preferences, with Islamic investors willing to take greater reductions in returns and increases in risk, to invest in Islamic funds. Finally, we implement a similar “Socially Responsible” fund, and find a similar pattern, indicating that Islamic investing and Socially Responsible investing are driven (at least in part) by religious and social preferences respectively.

### **Persistent Polarizing Effects of Persuasion: Experimental Evidence from Turkey (Ceren Baysan, ECO -Essex)**

Exposing voters to non-state-provisioned information is presumed to counter incumbents' efforts to keep voters uninformed in order to remain in power. In this study, I estimate the effect of randomized information campaigns on voter behavior and ideology in Turkey. My design allows me to estimate heterogeneous effects of information campaigns. I find that voter response to the same campaigns increased political polarization and the effect persisted for at least two years. I conclude that reducing censorship can be polarizing and, because average measures mask both positive and negative treatment effects, the impact of information campaigns on civil society is underestimated.

### **Peer effects in subjective expectations of HIV (Mike Hyunhoi Koo, ECO -Kent)**

Understanding how subjective expectations are generated and how expectations affect behaviour is critical to explore possible ways to deal with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. I estimate peer effects on the subjective expectation of contracting HIV in the villages of rural Malawi. To disentangle the peer effects based upon the subjective expectations of neighbours in villages, I use the variation of randomised monetary incentives offered from HIV test. The estimates show significant and positive peer effects on one's subjective likelihood of both current HIV infection and HIV infection in the future. This finding emphasises the importance of social network for HIV prevalence by affecting subjective expectations.

### **Session 5B**

### **The Effects of Personalized Information Provision on Access to Emergency Government Benefits: Experimental Evidence from India (Zaki Wahhaj, ECO- Kent)**

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting policies to control it have adversely affected the incomes and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of households, resulting in widespread poverty and food insecurity. In order to mitigate these consequences for poor households, many governments have introduced additional benefits as part of their existing welfare schemes. However, there is often a gap between the introduction of these programmes and access to the benefits they entail. To shed light on the source of these gaps, we conduct a field experiment with just over 1,000 slum-dwelling households in Uttar Pradesh, India during the COVID-19 pandemic. The intervention randomly exposed individuals to personalised information about government benefits via a phone call. We find that the simple and low-cost provision of personalised information i) increased the accuracy and precision of participants' knowledge about their entitled benefits, ii) increased access and utilization of benefits, and iii) improved wellbeing (as measured through food security and mental health). We do not find significant differences in effects based on whether males or females are targeted. These

findings document that i) there are large gaps in knowledge of and access to government benefits (in spite of widespread publicity about the programmes), and ii) these gaps can be greatly reduced via a simple and low-cost information intervention provided by a trusted and independent institution (in this case, IIT Kanpur).

### **We Can Challenge (Mike Brock, ECO –UEA)**

This field experiment implements two possible incentive mechanisms to assess how likely each is for yielding greater levels of engagement in recycling as a service. The first is a piece-rate system, similar to that already used in many European countries. The second uses a lottery-based system, its selection reinforced by evidence from experimental literature within behavioural economics showing lotteries can be very effective in stimulating effort through the competitive environment it creates (Davis & Reilly, 1998; Konrad, 2009). We also recognise an opportunity to model subject behaviour using the Bass Model (Bass, 1969) from the marketing literature. This enables us to gather a deeper understanding of the diffusion process among individuals for adopting the recycling service and make further predictions that could be generalised to other environments.