8th Annual Conference of Experimental Sociology
Sciences Po Paris, 26-28 August, 2026

Programme
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About the ACES

We are pleased to host the eighth Annual Conference of Experimental Sociology (ACES) in Sciences Po Paris on August 26-28, 2026.

ACES is now an established regular meeting for practitioners of the experimental method in the social sciences. Previous editions were Vienna 2018, Florence 2019, Ascona 2021, Utrecht 2022, Madrid 2023, Turin 2024, and Leipzig 2025.

The conference focuses on the use of experiments in sociology but is open to contributions from neighboring disciplines that employ experiments to investigate phenomena of overlapping interest (e.g. social norms, trust, education, discrimination).
As much as the event cultivates inter-disciplinary exchange, it also welcomes work based on different types of experiments, including those conducted in the laboratory, in the field, through surveys, or their many possible combinations.
Although the discussion of completed or planned experiments is the core of the event, the conference encourages as well contributions on the methodology of experimentation.
Whereas ACES has so far taken place in European institutions, its scope is global. We encourage submissions from junior scholars and researchers based in other regions, including low- and middle-income countries.

Experimentation in the social sciences

The last few decades have witnessed the growth and consolidation of experimentation in many social sciences. Across these disciplines, there have always been individual exponents of the method. For example, the sociological experiments of Sorokin, as well as Gosnell's experiments on voter turnout, date back as early as the 1920s. However, the institutionalization of the experimental method has followed different trajectories depending on the discipline. In social psychology, the experiment became the central method of inquiry in the post-war period. The 1980s saw the consolidation of experimentation in economics. In political science, an ascending trajectory is observable from the 2000s, which has become equally marked in sociology in the last decade. ACES is an expression and actor of this movement.

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14:00-15:30	Environment 1	Stereotypes
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16:00-17:30	Intergroup relations	Gender discrimination
17:30-19:00	**Salon B.108** Keynote address: Klarita Gërxhani (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) *More than content:* *Dimensionality of intersectionality and gender-differential treatment*	
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27 August

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16:00-17:30	Field experiments in educational settings	Prosocial behavior & Trust 1
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28 August

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Session and panel details

Wednesday 26 August
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Order of talks within panels confirmed

Room K.011	**Room K.008**
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Global Threats, Local Shields: Cooperation and Norms in a Nested Collective-Risk Dilemma Laura Marcon*, Vittorio Guida, Giulia Andrighetto	**Same Same but Different: An Experimental Study about the Different Explanatory Mechanisms of Antisemitism and Anti-Black Racism in Germany** Carina Schulz, Heiko Beyer*
	From Bias to Penalty: How Explicit Attitudes Predict Work-from-Home Career Disadvantage Agnieszka Kasperska*, Heejung Chung
The Inequality Trap: Testing Direct versus Indirect Effects of Resource Inequality on Collective Climate Action Lucas Sage*, Eva Vriens, Giulia Andrighetto	**Compensating or Reproducing Organizational Inequalities? Public Preferences and Expectations of Gender and Ethnic Disadvantage in Norway** Cristóbal Moya*, Øyvind Nicolay Wiborg
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Wednesday 26 August
16:00 - 17:30

Order of talks within panels confirmed

Room K.011	Room K.008
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A Vignette Experiment on Partnership Preferences Kseniia Gatskova	**Beyond the Motherhood Penalty: Employer Stereotypes About Potential Fertility in the Chilean Labor Market** Tania Hutt
Rallying around the flagging button: An experimental investigation of intergroup discrimination in democratic norm enforcement Roeland Endtz*, Amalia Álvarez-Benjumea	**A Man's Kitchen? Experimental Evidence on Gender Inequality in the German (Haute) Cuisine Sector** Lucas Ferl*, Mark Lutter
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Thursday 27 August
9:00 - 10:30

Order of talks within panels confirmed

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Order of talks within panels confirmed

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Thursday 27 August
13:45 - 15:30
This session is deliberately 15 minutes longer

Order of talks within panels confirmed

Room K.011	Room K.008
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Thursday 27 August
16:00 - 17:30

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Order of talks within panels confirmed

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Friday 28 August
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Americana* : When Does Foreign Education Pay Off? Gender, Occupation, and Employer Effects in Nigeria Abiola Oyebanjo	**The Paradox of Trust, and Accountability: Experimental Evidence of Vote-Selling Willingness from Finland and Hungary** Davit Totadze
From activities to purposes: experimental evidence on gendered preferences for higher-education programmes Juliette Michelet*, Thomas Beuchot , Ying Zhong, Coralie Chevallier , Hugo Mercier	**The psychological gap in preferences for charitable interventions: a cross-national study** Thomas Beuchot*, Lydia Yahia Cherif, Jessie Barker, Maria Modanu, Coralie Chevallier
The Politics of Language. The Consequences of Banning Gender-Inclusive Language Anica Waldendorf	**The Effects of Exposure to the Refugee Crisis on Trust in ingroup and outgroup members** Davide Barrera*, Nicolò Cavalli, Camilla Borgna, Effrosyni Charitopoulou, Viktoriia Tomnyuk, Chiara Allegri
Chair: Anica Waldendorf	**Chair: Davide Barrera**

Talk and speaker details by panel

Environment 1

Wednesday 26 August, 14:00-15:30, Room K.011

The Inequality Trap: Testing Direct versus Indirect Effects of Resource Inequality on Collective Climate Action

Lucas Sage*, Eva Vriens, Giulia Andrighetto
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Climate policy confronts an apparent equity-pollution dilemma. Empirical evidence demonstrates that income elasticity of carbon emissions consistently falls below unity, meaning a 1% increase in income translates to less than 1% increase in emissions. This sublinear relationship arises because wealthy individuals save larger income shares, while lower-income households allocate more to carbon-intensive necessities like heating and transportation. Consequently, scholars have argued under the equity-pollution dilemma framework that redistributive policies transferring wealth from rich to poor could paradoxically increase aggregate emissions. Yet even with existing inequality, emission reductions remain insufficient to meet climate targets. Achieving these targets requires sustained collective action, which inequality may undermine by generating perceptions of unfairness and eroding social cohesion. When citizens perceive that burdens are distributed unequally, they become less willing to support climate policies or make personal sacrifices. We hypothesize that inequality's indirect effects on social cooperation may outweigh its direct effects on consumption-based emissions. We bring these competing forces together in a laboratory experiment using a collective risk social dilemma. Small groups must collectively contribute enough resources to avoid an environmental catastrophe that would eliminate all remaining endowments. We manipulate the level of inequality across conditions, creating groups with equal or unequal resource distributions. Crucially, we integrate the income-emission elasticity directly into our design by calibrating collective contribution thresholds: because unequal groups have lower baseline emissions, they face proportionally lower collective goals to avoid catastrophe. This design creates a direct test of the two opposing forces. Under the direct consumption effect, higher inequality should improve group outcomes because the collective target becomes easier to reach. Under the indirect cooperation effect, higher inequality should worsen group outcomes because it corrodes the willingness to cooperate, making even easier targets harder to achieve. Participants make simultaneous contribution decisions without communication, reflecting real-world climate contexts where citizens make uncoordinated choices about political support, compliance, or consumption. The design generates a clean test: holding baseline emissions constant through threshold adjustment, do unequal groups cooperate more or less effectively than equal groups? Group-level success rates provide our primary outcome, measuring whether groups avoid catastrophe. Individual contribution patterns and fairness perceptions serve as secondary outcomes, identifying whether wealthy participants contribute proportionally less, whether poor participants withdraw contributions in response, and whether perceived burden-sharing affects cooperation. Quantifying the relative magnitude of direct versus indirect effects will clarify whether addressing inequality represents an obstacle to climate action or a prerequisite for it.

Beyond the Townhall: Spatial Anchoring and LLM Agents for Scalable Participatory Urban Planning

Hausladen Carina*, Javier Argota Sánchez-Vaquerizo, Michael Siebenmann, Arthur Capozzi, Sachit Mahajan, Dirk Helbing
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Participatory urban planning is central to sustainable city-making, yet the technical complexity of such interventions often limits meaningful involvement by diverse publics. We introduce a scalable digital participation platform that embeds sustainability projects within a navigable digital twin. Citizens experience a guided virtual walkthrough with audio narration employing the method of loci and spatial anchoring to support mnemonic encoding and recall. This immersive interface is augmented by two purpose-built LLM assistants: one delivers source-grounded factual clarifications, while the other facilitates reflective discussion. We evaluated this system in a randomized controlled online experiment (N = 195) against conventional industry practices (static visualizations and text-based consultations). Results show that spatially anchored immersive presentation significantly improved information recall, which substantially shifted participants' attention from individual inconveniences to collective, community-oriented sustainability benefits. Consequently, participants provided significantly more constructive, solution-focused feedback to the (simulated) municipal authority. These findings establish a practical tool for cities and policymakers to foster inclusive, democratic participation in sustainability transitions.

The new normal? Quantifying the objective-subjective gap in temperature anomalies

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In this project, we examine citizens' perceptions of temperature anomalies. We contribute to a growing literature on the drivers of climate change concern and attitudes. Generally, Ripberger et al. (2017) demonstrated that humans can perceive weather anomalies. A recent meta-analysis and literature review reported at least a small to moderate relationship (Xia et al. 2022; Howe et al. 2019). Others again found more substantial support for a link in Germany, mainly among climate change believers (Osberghaus and Fugger 2022). We contend that theoretical and methodological issues are deeply intertwined in research design choices attached to the use of the spatio-temporal analysis of individual-level data. Our main focus is on heterogeneous group differences for cold and warm anomalies across respondents who have experienced extreme weather events before, have different climate change beliefs, worry and policy preferences, and shifting temporal baselines. The main aim is to quantify the gap between objective variation and subjective perceptions across these subgroups. We aim to leverage the potential of the georeferenced version of the German Longitudinal Environmental Panel (GLEN) panel to address these issues. Our items are part of the Open Modules of the GLEN with an estimated sample size of more than 6000 respondents. We address these questions with a vignette study, where we randomly vary displayed temperatures for a specific day in Germany and ask respondents to rate this temperature. This is based on a between-subject randomization with 9 groups. The treatment is a metric variable of temperatures leading from -9 to +15 degrees Celsius in 3-degree increments. This experimental study is complemented

with a second descriptive one, which asks respondents about the same assessment for the day of the interview. We will utilize this random variation and real-world experience to analyze perceptions of temperature anomalies among the different subgroups. We furthermore contribute to the role of temporal dimensions by specifying different baselines based on short- and long-term as well respondent-specific lifetime reference scales. Our primary analyses will use Gaussian GAMs, modelling the mean perceived temperature response as a smooth function of vignette temperature, actual temperature, and additional covariates.

Global Threats, Local Shields: Cooperation and Norms in a Nested Collective-Risk Dilemma

Laura Marcon*, Vittorio Guida, Giulia Andrighetto
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Climate change and natural disasters pose global collective action problems: while mitigation requires coordinated effort at a global scale, the impacts of climate-related disasters are unevenly distributed across local communities. This asymmetry raises a fundamental question for collective action under risk: when global cooperation is uncertain, will individuals prefer locally coordinated solutions that offer partial protection at a cost?

We investigate this question using a nested collective-risk dilemma that introduces a local level of cooperation into a high-risk collective action setting. In our experiment, participants face a high probability of collective loss unless a global contribution threshold is reached. Unlike standard collective-risk dilemmas, we allow individuals to contribute either to a global public good or to a local one. Reaching the global threshold fully eliminates the disaster risk for all participants. Reaching a local threshold, instead, provides local protection but does not fully prevent the disaster: if the disaster occurs, locally protected participants incur a cost reflecting the impact of the event.

We implement four treatments. The baseline is a standard collective-risk dilemma without a nested structure. In the remaining treatments, we introduce a local level and vary the cost of disaster impact for locally protected individuals: (i) a low local cost, designed to encourage local cooperation; (ii) a high local cost, expected to shift incentives toward global cooperation; and (iii) an asymmetric condition in which one local group faces double the impact cost of the other. This asymmetric treatment is expected to generate the weakest cooperative outcomes, potentially undermining both global coordination and local cooperation.

Our central hypothesis is that introducing a local level weakens global cooperation by increasing strategic substitution, while simultaneously strengthening local cooperation by reducing social uncertainty and free-riding – except under severe cost asymmetry. In addition, we elicit participants' beliefs to examine the emergence of social norms at different levels. We ask whether global and local cooperation are governed by the same normative expectations with varying strength, or by distinct norms altogether.

By isolating the interaction between risk, social uncertainty, and nested cooperation, our study sheds light on why local solutions often prevail in global climate challenges, even when they are collectively suboptimal.

Stereotypes

Wednesday 26 August, 14:00-15:30, Room K.008

The Face of Wealth, the Face of Poverty: Eliciting Socioeconomic Stereotypes with Reverse Correlation

Sarah Grezes-Besset*, Daniel Nettle, Mélusine Boon-Falleur
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Research shows that people have stereotypes about others linked to perceived resource possession. These stereotypes appear to be robust and socially meaningful, as they structure impressions across different contexts and can override other commonly used social cues. Previous work suggests that some beliefs attributed to race reflect assumptions about poverty and resource scarcity. Another recent study shows that people produce similar, negatively stereotyped images of a “poor person” regardless of their political ideology, suggesting that implicit stereotypes related to poverty are widely shared. But what is the content of such stereotypes? The SCM (Stereotype Content Model), proposed by Fiske and colleagues, identifies two core dimensions in social evaluation: perceived competence and warmth (which typically includes trustworthiness). The model predicts that wealthy individuals are perceived as more competent and less warm than poor individuals, and vis versa. However, several recent studies find positive correlations between perceived wealth and perceived trustworthiness. Other work on first impressions from faces suggests that there are two dimensions underlying face evaluations: perceived trustworthiness and dominance. Finally, research shows that individuals from resource-poor and unpredictable environments tend to be perceived as being more impulsive, more socially opportunistic, and as having lower self-control than people from resource-sufficient and predictable environments. A major constraint when assessing stereotypes is the social desirability bias, i.e. the tendency for people to tailor their responses to appear socially acceptable. For example, a study shows that in an experiment people implicitly, but not explicitly, favored the rich over the middle class. Given these considerations, the present study uses a novel, data-driven method to investigate whether high-income and low-income individuals are perceived differently: the reverse correlation technique. Grounded in Todorov's work on face evaluation, this method involves (1) generating a proxy of a mental image and (2) rating this image on several traits. In Phase 1, participants repeatedly choose among many images of a face superimposed with random noise, the person who “has the highest [/lowest] income”. Then, the experimenter averages the noise patterns of the chosen images to obtain an individual prototype of a high [/low]-income individual. In Phase 2, an independent sample of participants rates those prototypes on several traits: warmth, competence, trust, dominance and time-horizon. This method allows to elicit stereotypes related to resource possession while reducing self-report and social desirability bias effects. The experiment will be conducted using faces of men and women to account for gender interactions. We hypothesize that images of high-income people will be judged on average as less warm and short-term oriented and more trustworthy, competent than images of low-income people. We treat dominance as an exploratory outcome. As of April 2026, pilots and preregistration have been completed, and we expect to present full results at the conference.

Same Same but Different: An Experimental Study about the Different Explanatory Mechanisms of Antisemitism and Anti-Black Racism in Germany

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Our contribution shifts the long-standing debate on the relationship between antisemitism and racism from definitional disputes to an empirical test of underlying explanatory mechanisms. Empirically, we draw on a face-to-face survey conducted in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, in 2024 (n = 1300), which includes a randomised visual-vignette experiment designed to capture behaviourally oriented judgments in an everyday context. Respondents indicated the likelihood of taking an empty seat next to another person whose religious symbol and skin tone were experimentally varied. Average treatment effects reveal avoidance behaviour toward both Jewish and Black depicted persons. To analyse heterogeneity in these effects, we estimate conditional average treatment effects using Bayesian Additive Regression Trees (BART). The results show that conspiracy belief, anti-intellectualism and anti-elitism are systematically associated with stronger antisemitic avoidance but do not meaningfully moderate anti-Black racist avoidance. Authoritarianism, by contrast, is associated with stronger avoidance in both contexts, with particularly pronounced effects in the case of anti-Black racism. These findings indicate that antisemitism and anti-Black racism share certain determinants but also rely on distinct ideological mechanisms, with implications for sociological theorising on antisemitism and racism as well as for prevention strategies.

From Bias to Penalty: How Explicit Attitudes Predict Work-from-Home Career Disadvantage

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The adoption of work-from-home (WFH) arrangements has expanded sharply in recent years (Eurofound, 2022), yet negative perceptions of remote work persist. Those who WFH are frequently perceived as less motivated, committed, and productive, which can reduce their promotion prospects relative to office-based colleagues (Wang & Chung, 2026; Kasperska et al., 2024; Munsch, 2016). Such “flexibility stigma” may discourage uptake of WFH, with potential adverse consequences for employee well-being and organisational performance (Lott & Abendroth, 2020). Although prior research documents how biased perceptions lead to WFH career penalties (Matysiak et al., 2025), limited evidence exists on how WFH stigma manifests across countries or how individual characteristics influence whether bias results in actual career disadvantage. This study draws on nationally representative survey and experimental data collected in spring 2025. The sample includes 20,300 employees across 15 European countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom), capturing institutional diversity in welfare regimes and varieties of capitalism. The study design combines a survey assessing explicit attitudes toward WFH with a factorial vignette experiment evaluating behavioural outcomes. The survey captured respondents' personal attitudes toward remote workers' productivity and commitment, their perceptions of managerial norms regarding WFH, and their beliefs about potential career penalties for WFH. The vignette experiment manipulated five employee characteristics, including WFH status (office; hybrid). Each respondent evaluated three vignette profiles and answered how likely they were to promote such a worker. We employed latent class analysis (LCA) on four indicators of explicit WFH bias to identify distinct stigma profiles, and linear multilevel models with country-level random intercepts and WFH random slopes to examine whether explicit attitudes predict promotion outcomes. LCA revealed four latent stigma profiles: (1) Stigma rejectors–low personal stigma and low expectation of penalties; (2) Stigma aware–personally neutral but aware of societal stigma; (3) Embraced stigma–intermediate personal stigma aligned with perceived societal stigma; (4) Strong stigmatisers–high personal stigma and expectation of penalties. Cross-national differences in the prevalence of these profiles were observed, likely reflecting variation in cultural norms and institutional contexts. Regression analyses indicate that higher levels of explicit stigma lead to larger promotion penalties for WFH employees, a pattern generally consistent across countries, though effect sizes vary. Importantly, career penalties for hybrid workers occur when respondents perceive that negative attitudes toward remote work are held by others, regardless of the respondents' own beliefs about WFH productivity or commitment. This observation aligns with Bicchieri's (2016) framework on social norms, which emphasises that individuals tend to enforce behaviours they perceive as normative in society, rather than based solely on personal beliefs about what is appropriate. Additionally, the translation of stigma into evaluative penalties is socially conditioned, as even among individuals with similar levels of explicit bias ("strong stigma"), promotion penalties are larger among childless employees, older workers, and those with less WFH experience. These findings highlight that WFH-related inequalities are shaped not only by what individuals believe but also by who enacts those beliefs and under what conditions.

Compensating or Reproducing Organizational Inequalities? Public Preferences and Expectations of Gender and Ethnic Disadvantage in Norway

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This study examines how the general public responds to inequality-generating mechanisms in organizations in Norway. Drawing on Relational Inequality Theory (RIT), we analyze how gender and ethnic background shape the perceived legitimacy of claims to valued organizational resources through mechanisms of social closure and exploitation. We replicate and extend a recent U.S. discrete choice experiment that examined whether people, when placed in the role of organizational decision-makers, align with, compensate for, or disregard workplace status disadvantages. The previous study found that respondents express compensatory preferences, favoring female and non-white candidates in access to opportunities, while expecting organizational decision-makers to favor white men and offer them higher salaries.

The Norwegian case offers a relevant context for testing the compensatory preferences observed in the U.S. Compared with the U.S., organizational inequalities in Norway are structured less by race as a category and more by ethnic background. Accordingly, this study focuses on ethnic background and examines responses to candidates identified as being of native Norwegian, Eastern European, Asian, or African descent. Norway is also a particularly relevant case due to its social democratic model, characterized by commitments to equal opportunity, redistribution, and welfare provision. At the same time, recent research documents persistent discrimination in the labor market. This extension allows us to assess whether compensatory public preferences, coupled with expectations that organizations reproduce inequality, generalize to a different context and a different system of status boundaries.

The study is based on a survey experiment with a probability sample to be drawn from the Norwegian population register. The sample (N = 4,500) is stratified into three groups of equal size: (1) the general population, (2) native Norwegian respondents working in managerial or supervisory roles, and (3) respondents with an Eastern European background who also work in these roles. This design allows us to compare the preferences and expectations of the wider public with those of actors more involved in organizational decision-making, and to examine whether evaluators' backgrounds matter.

The experiment follows the U.S. promotion design, in which participants recommend an internal candidate for a managerial promotion. Candidates appear as highly qualified, manipulating performance and background information. Candidate gender and ethnic background are experimentally manipulated by using stereotypical names. Additionally, this study will test standardized visual stimuli depicting faces to signal ethnic background, strengthening the salience and realism of status cues. Respondents provide their recommendations and salary proposals, as well as their expectations about the same decisions by the firm's executive team. Executive team composition is also manipulated, contrasting an all-native-male team with a diverse team.

By measuring both personal preferences and expectations about organizational decision-makers, the study expands RIT's account of the legitimacy of inequality-generating mechanisms within and beyond organizations. It allows us to distinguish support for compensating status disadvantages from beliefs about how inequality is actually reproduced within firms. More broadly, the project contributes to debates on workplace inequality, diversity, and equal opportunity by examining whether the Norwegian public challenges existing disadvantages and expects organizations to maintain them.

Intergroup relations

Wednesday 26 August, 16:00-17:30, Room K.011

Religiosity and social boundaries in marriage formation in Turkey

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Social boundaries play a crucial role in shaping intergroup relations, particularly in intimate domains like marriage formation, where the acceptance of an out-group member signifies the crossing of social divides. While existing research has extensively examined ethnic and racial boundaries in Western societies, the role of religiosity in shaping marital boundaries between religious and non-religious groups remains underexplored, especially in Muslim-majority societies. Bringing together theoretical considerations from research on social distance with scholarship on partnership formation and spouse selection, this study examines how (perceived) religiosity influences the willingness to accept an individual as a marriage partner for a family member in Turkey. Using a factorial survey experiment embedded within a large representative face-to-face sample of the Turkish population, we analyze whether boundaries between religious and secular groups can be bridged through resource exchange. Our findings reveal persistent, but partly asymmetric religious–non-religious boundaries, with non-religious respondents showing stronger boundaries towards religious persons than vice versa. The boundaries are, moreover, moderated by socio-economic status and facial attractiveness, indicating that persons are willing to accept boundary-crossing in exchange for valued resources. Moreover, gendered patterns emerge, reflecting distinct expectations for male and female partners. This study contributes to our understanding of boundary-making processes in intimate social contexts, highlighting how religiosity influences marriage decisions and shapes patterns of social integration and cohesion in contemporary Turkey.

Perceived Social Distance, Symbolic Boundaries, and Everyday Classifications: The Imagined Topography of the Social Space in the United States

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Social differentiation in contemporary societies is multidimensional and durably structured. While research has documented inequalities and intergroup relations along specific axes, less is known about how people themselves perceive the structure of the social world. Focusing on the United States, this paper develops a systematic ethnosociology of social differentiation by examining how Americans understand friendship networks to be structured along social dimensions. The paper extends relational methods for measuring representations of social relations and heterogeneity therein through an original conjoint experiment, and maps symbolic boundaries across ten dimensions and more than thirty social categories. The findings show that perceived divisions span all dimensions, though to varying degrees: age, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation are the most salient, while immigration status (except for the undocumented), gender, family status, and locality are less central. Particularly sharp boundaries are drawn around Muslim individuals, between straight and gay or bisexual individuals, across upper- and lower-class occupations, and

between Republicans and Democrats. In addition, the findings indicate that despite variation across respondents, Americans converge on a shared underlying logic of social differentiation.

A Vignette Experiment on Partnership Preferences

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This study examines partnership formation among refugees as a potential mechanism of social integration and upward mobility, with a particular focus on its implications for labor market integration. While classical assimilation theory conceptualizes interethnic partnerships as a key pathway to social integration (Gordon, 1964), empirical evidence on their consequences remains mixed and context-dependent. Prior research shows that interethnic unions are often associated with improved employment outcomes, including higher labor force participation and earnings (Furtado & Song, 2015; Nottmeyer, 2015), commonly attributed to enhanced access to social networks, language acquisition, and cultural capital. At the same time, these associations may partly reflect selection processes (Tegunimataka, 2021), and gender-specific patterns complicate the picture: for example, female migrants may experience labor market disadvantages within interethnic partnerships due to household specialization or partner income effects (Basu, 2015). Overall, the relationship between partnership formation and integration is shaped by intersecting factors such as gender, origin, and institutional context, yet the underlying mechanisms—particularly among refugees—remain insufficiently understood. Moreover, existing research has largely focused on formal marriage, neglecting the diversification of partnership forms in contemporary Europe, including non-marital cohabitation, dating, and non-residential relationships (Pailhé, 2015). This gap is particularly relevant for refugees, whose partnership trajectories are often shaped by displacement, family separation, legal uncertainty, and constrained opportunity structures. At the same time, digital platforms have expanded opportunities for partner search beyond co-ethnic and local networks (Rosenfeld, Thomas & Hausen, 2019), potentially transforming partner selection processes among refugees. Despite these developments, little is known about refugees' partner preferences, especially under conditions of uncertainty and limited choice sets. To address these gaps, we designed a factorial survey (vignette) experiment to systematically investigate partnership preferences among refugees. Respondents evaluate hypothetical scenarios describing a third person's potential partnership decision, allowing us to capture latent preferences while minimizing social desirability bias. The vignettes experimentally vary key attributes along multiple dimensions: (1) characteristics of the fictitious person (gender and family situation, including being single, co-residing with a partner, or having a partner abroad); (2) socio-demographic and structural attributes of potential partners (age, education, employment status, parental status, and legal residence status); (3) ethnic background and migration status; and (4) broader life circumstances (e.g., housing situation, prior children, and employment conditions). The dependent variable is the stated preference for specific partnership constellations. This design enables the identification of causal effects of partner characteristics on partnership preferences and allows for the reconstruction of underlying decision-making logics. In particular, it facilitates the analysis of how preferences vary by respondents' gender, family situation, and life stage. Our study advances understanding of social stratification and mobility among refugee populations and allows us to uncover micro-level mechanisms linking partnership preferences to labor market integration.

Rallying around the flagging button: An experimental investigation of intergroup discrimination in democratic norm enforcement

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Literature on political culture has identified democratic norms as a bulwark against growing authoritarianism. As such, enforcement of democratic norms among citizens is considered a key mechanism in preventing democratic erosion. However, this argument rests on the assumption that citizens perceive expressing antidemocratic sentiments as a social norm violation. Additionally, it remains unclear whether norm enforcement is uniform: the perceived political identity of the norm violator could affect sanctioning intentions. While findings on democratic hypocrisy suggest that citizens are more likely to sanction political out-groups over in-groups, the opposite is implied by literature on the black sheep effect. This investigation tests these competing expectations in the Spanish context, focusing on freedom of expression. First, an original incentivised survey assesses whether social media posts calling for the curbing of this principle are perceived as violations of a social norm. Then, an online experiment examines whether the presence of political cues of radical political allies or adversaries affects the likelihood of flagging these posts as inappropriate. Our results indicate that while antidemocratic expressions are perceived as violations of a social norm, norm enforcement among citizens is far from uniform. In line with findings on democratic hypocrisy, in-bloc and out-bloc cues respectively decrease and increase the likelihood of flagging a post as inappropriate. Exploratory analyses show that selective norm enforcement is concentrated among radical partisans, and that it manifests asymmetrically. While radical-left partisans exempt their in-group from democratic norm enforcement, radical-right partisans enforce norms significantly less overall, unless violated by an out-group. These findings emphasise that democratic norm enforcement is conditional on intergroup dynamics, while revealing the multidimensional nature of democratic hypocrisy.

Gender discrimination

Wednesday 26 August, 16:00-17:30, Room K.008

Gender Discrimination following Parental Leave

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Gender inequality in the labor market continues to be strongly shaped by parenthood, with women's careers and earnings declining sharply after the birth of a child. Although men and women in Sweden express highly egalitarian attitudes, parental leave uptake remains gendered, and the mechanisms sustaining this imbalance are not fully understood. This study examines whether unequal treatment of men and women based on their parental leave choices—termed leave-based gender discrimination—helps explain persistent disparities. Using a nationwide vignette experiment conducted through Sweden's probability-based Novus panel, we randomly assigned 710 respondents to evaluate an employee (male/female) who had taken parental leave of varying lengths (from two weeks to 15 months, as well as a control condition). Participants then recommended a salary increase for the employee. The factorial design allows us to isolate gendered evaluations of identical leave durations. Results show that women who take shorter-than-average leaves receive lower salary recommendations than men taking the same leave. We also find that men receive lower salary recommendations with longer leave while women's recommendations remain relatively constant. Regression models confirm a significant negative association between leave length and salary recommendations for men but not for women. These findings demonstrate how parents may be subject to gender-specific penalties for non-normative leave choices, highlighting how deeply entrenched norms of caregiving continue to shape workplace evaluations even in an egalitarian context.

Beyond the Motherhood Penalty: Employer Stereotypes About Potential Fertility in the Chilean Labor Market

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Despite growing scholarship on the motherhood penalty, existing research has predominantly conceptualized motherhood as a binary status—women either are or are not mothers—overlooking how employers may also penalize women's potential to have children in the future. I introduce potential fertility risk as a theoretically distinct and underexplored dimension of employer decision-making: the expectation that a worker or applicant may become a parent in the near future. While the motherhood penalty literature documents how actual motherhood activates negative stereotypes around current competence and workplace commitment (Ridgeway and Correll 2004), I theorize that potential fertility risk activates a qualitatively different set of stereotypes rooted in anticipatory evaluations—assumptions about a candidate's future cost, long-term risk, and growth potential (Thébaud and Taylor 2021; Bass 2015). These anticipatory stereotypes can penalize women before they ever become mothers, representing an understudied mechanism of gender inequality in hiring. To examine this argument, I implement a factorial survey experiment administered online to Chilean adults in supervisory, managerial, or ownership roles—those with direct or indirect hiring authority. Respondents evaluate profiles of fictitious job applicants that vary randomly across six attributes: gender, age, partnered status, parental status, family plans, and occupation. After

reviewing each profile, respondents rate applicants on four outcome dimensions: perceived organizational cost, long-term commitment risk, growth potential, and current competence. In terms of the design, I use a D-efficiency optimized design to ensure orthogonality across attribute combinations and maximize statistical efficiency. Then, I plan to estimate Average Marginal Component Effects (AMCEs) using linear regression, examining both individual attribute effects and theoretically motivated interactions—particularly the interaction between parental status and family plans, which operationalizes the distinction between current motherhood and potential fertility risk (Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto 2014). I will also estimate models separately for childless and mother profiles, isolating the effect of potential fertility risk within each motherhood category before estimating gender-moderated models. This analytic strategy tests whether potential fertility risk operates as a distinct penalty even among women who are not yet mothers, and whether its effects are moderated by respondent gender, age, and gender role attitudes. I welcome feedback on these design and analytic choices. This submission does not yet include final results but I will share pretest findings from approximately 200 respondents at the conference. This study makes three contributions. Theoretically, I expand the motherhood penalty framework by reconceptualizing motherhood as bidimensional—comprising current maternal status and potential fertility risk—opening analytical space to observe heterogeneity within the conventionally homogeneous categories of "mothers" and "childless women." Empirically, I provide the first large-scale experimental evidence on these employer stereotypes in Latin America, where family policy is predominantly maternalist (Blofield and Franzoni 2014) and experimental methods remain underutilized—despite growing evidence that the motherhood penalty operates in the region (Villanueva and Lin 2020; Berniell et al. 2021). Methodologically, I demonstrate how survey experimental methods can causally disentangle overlapping social statuses that observational designs cannot separate, offering a template for future experimental work on intersecting labor market penalties.

Perceived Lack of Fit Rather than Productivity Concerns? Employer Responses to Flexible Work Requests

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The Covid-19 pandemic has fundamentally altered daily working life for millions of employees. At the onset of the pandemic, many employers allowed their staff to work from home whenever possible and in some countries, organizations were even legally required to offer remote work options (BMAS 2021). Even several years after the pandemic, remote work remains widely available, as recent analyses of job postings show (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2024). Working from home is particularly attractive for parents seeking to better reconcile professional and family life (Arntz, Ben Yahmed, & Berlingieri 2020; Goldberg 2022; HBS 2023). Before the pandemic, using flexible work arrangements or working remotely was often associated with stigma (Lott & Abendroth 2020; Lott & Chung 2016). Against this background, the present study investigates whether this so-called “flexibility stigma” (Williams, Blair-Loy, & Berdahl 2013) still shapes employers' reactions in the post-pandemic labor market. Specifically, we ask: Do job applicants who express a desire to work remotely or flexible hours face disadvantages in hiring processes ? And if so, do all groups of workers face equal disadvantages or do such flexibility penalties vary by gender, parenthood, and relationship status as well as across occupations and organizations? Lastly, what are the underlying reasons ? Are employers reluctant to hire employees with flexibility requests due to productivity concerns, or do they instead perceive a “lack of fit?” To answer these questions, we proceeded in three steps. First, we conducted a field experiment across 11 occupations and eight industrial sectors in Germany, in which we randomly varied applicants' gender and parental status, as well as whether they indicated a preference for flexible work (flexible hours or working from home) (N ~ 15,000). Second, we conducted a factorial survey experiment (FSE) with the same employers (N ~ 500) and asked them about hireability, salary, expected productivity, and organizational fit of fictious job applicants that varied on the very same characteristics as those in the field experiment. In Study 3, we conducted qualitative, in-depth interviews with a select number of employers that participated in both studies to better understand the mechanisms (N ~ 20) driving the results found in Study 1 and Study 2. The findings show that the field and the factorial survey experiment (Study 1 and Study 2) indicate that applicants with flexibility requests—in particular requests regarding remote work—experience employer discrimination. Interestingly, however, these penalties do not vary between different groups of workers but only across different occupations and types of organizations. The findings from the FSE and the qualitative in-depth interviews both suggest that penalties for requesting remote work are due to lack-of-fit rather than productivity concerns. With these insights, our study delivers important insights into how organizations and their employees can address concerns surrounding remote work.

A Man's Kitchen? Experimental Evidence on Gender Inequality in the German (Haute) Cuisine Sector

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The question of whether women are disadvantaged in male-dominated occupations has been the subject of extensive research. The restaurant industry presents a particularly striking paradox: while professional cooking remains a male-dominated field, cooking in the private sphere is still predominantly performed by women. In haute cuisine and Michelin-starred gastronomy, leadership positions are almost exclusively held by men. This imbalance is particularly evident among Michelin-starred chefs. In 2024, only 13 of the 349 Michelin-awarded kitchens in Germany were led by women—amounting to just 3.72 percent. Existing literature offers a range of explanations, often pointing to the historically masculine-militaristic, and at times openly misogynistic, institutionalized roots of haute cuisine. However, despite numerous interview studies, ethnographies, and a small number of quantitative analyses, no study to date has examined these stereotypes using experimental designs. This study presents the results of a nationwide factorial survey experiment conducted among respondents from 503 restaurants in Germany. Participants were presented with vignettes describing fictional male and female applicants for a potential position as head chef in their establishment, and were asked to evaluate the applicants' suitability based on randomly assigned vignettes. Across 32 text vignettes, the factors gender, family status, previous employment, and recommendation from personal networks were experimentally varied. Regression analyses suggest that women are not necessarily disadvantaged in hiring decisions simply because of their gender—single women are even evaluated somewhat more positively than single men. However, when the fictional applicants are described as married with two children, female candidates are considered substantially less suitable than otherwise comparable male applicants. Thus, our findings indicate that women are not discriminated in cuisines per se, but rather women with children. This pattern suggests that the long-standing belief from the early era of professionalized gastronomy that women are “incapable of culinary creativity” (Ferguson 1998, p. 612) has largely lost its relevance. Yet motherhood penalties continue to place women at a competitive disadvantage.

Wednesday 26 August, 17:30-19:00, Salon B.108

Keynote address

More than content: Dimensionality of intersectionality and gender-differential treatment

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Economic decisions are made about multidimensional people, yet identity effects are often studied one dimension at a time. Research on intersectionality asks how the content of identity combinations shapes differential treatment. We ask whether their dimensionality -how many identities are visible- matters in its own right for how gender shapes economic allocation. To answer this, we distinguish belief-based from preference-based sources of gender-differential treatment, and its explicit from its implicit form. A preference-signaling model predicts that additional visible identities make a choice less informative about the chooser's gender preferences, so explicit preference-based treatment weakens even when gender-related beliefs are unchanged. We test this in a multi-part experiment combining laboratory, online, and lab-in-the-field data, varying the visibility of gender, nationality, and socioeconomic status. When gender alone is revealed, evaluators explicitly favor women in candidate selection. Revealing further identities sharply erodes this favoritism, and the decline tracks the number of identities rather than their content. Competence beliefs remain flat and at parity throughout, so preferences move even when beliefs do not. Dictator allocations, by contrast, show no gender-differential treatment even when gender alone is shown, so no expressive signal exists there for added identities to dilute. The number of visible identities thus shapes gender-differential treatment in its own right, which one-dimensional analysis, by construction, cannot detect.

Gender: family and parenthood

Thursday 27 August, 9:00-10:30, Room K.011

Reading the Reproductive Clock: Cue-Based Categorization of Current and Potential Motherhood

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Social categorization research shows that observers infer group memberships from observable cues, shaping how people are treated in evaluative settings. Yet most work focuses on fixed statuses, especially ethnoracial categories, leaving dynamic and prospective statuses understudied. We extend cue-based and infracategorical approaches (Monk 2022) to examine motherhood as a socially meaningful status (Ridgeway and Correll 2004) with two distinct forms: current motherhood (whether a woman has children now) and potential motherhood (whether and when she is likely to have children). This distinction shows that categorization operates not only through present group membership but also through judgments about likely future statuses, bringing time and the life course into the study of how inequality is produced through categorization. We conducted a conjoint survey experiment with 752 employed U.S. adults with managerial and hiring experience, recruited via Prolific in September 2021. Respondents evaluated six fictitious Facebook profiles of women varying in age (25 to 45), marital status (single/married), race/ethnicity (Non-Hispanic White, Non-Hispanic Black, Latina), and social class (working-class/professional occupation). Race/ethnicity and gender were signaled through names and blurred photos (Gaddis 2017). For each profile, respondents classified the woman as a current mother or childless and indicated the expected timing of future childbearing, from the next 2 years to never. We estimate average marginal component effects (AMCEs) via logistic regression with clustered standard errors (N = 4,512; Hainmueller, Hopkins, and Yamamoto 2014). Three findings emerge. First, for current motherhood, age and marital status are the dominant cues: a 35-year-old is 24 percentage points more likely than a 25-year-old to be categorized as a mother, and married women are 29 points more likely than single women. Race/ethnicity and class also shape categorization, but more modestly: Black and Latina women and working-class women are more readily read as current mothers, consistent with racialized and classed reproductive stereotypes (Collins 2004; Ghavami and Peplau 2013). Second, for potential motherhood among childless women, age operates as a temporal boundary rather than a linear probability: younger ages signal high-risk windows, older ages as increasingly foreclosed trajectories, and age 35 as a threshold of maximum uncertainty where imminent motherhood and permanent childlessness appear similarly plausible (Billari et al. 2010; Guzzo 2022). Race plays no significant role, while class remains relevant: working-class childless women face more imminent fertility risk than professional women. Third, being categorized as a current mother reorganizes expectations about future fertility, compressing childbearing timelines toward the near term — an 18-percentage-point increase in birth expectations within 2 years, beyond what demographic cues alone predict. Perceived motherhood does not simply add information; it reconfigures how observers read a woman's reproductive trajectory. These findings show that cue-based categorization extends beyond fixed group membership to prospective social positions. Motherhood should be understood not as a single category but as a set of related yet distinct processes unfolding across the life course, with implications for how women are evaluated in workplaces well before, between, or instead of any actual birth.

Workplace Policies and Couples' Bargaining: A Dyadic Factorial Survey of Adaptive Strategies in Paid and Unpaid Work

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Couples' work and family trajectories are jointly shaped through coordination between partners, making employment and household arrangements relational rather than individual outcomes. Decisions in these domains reflect adaptive strategies to changing work and family demands; for example, an employee's increased overtime work may prompt their partner to reduce their own employment hours and take on more household chores. Such outcomes are importantly shaped by gender norms and partners' relative bargaining power (often proxied by income), yet the relative importance of these mechanisms remains unclear despite extensive theorization across sociology and economics (e.g., relative resources theory, time availability approach, doing gender, bargaining and collective models). Empirical research typically relies either on qualitative approaches or large-scale survey and register data, which cannot isolate the conditions under which specific strategies emerge nor disentangle individuals' preferences from structural and relational constraints (such as labor market discrimination or intra-couple power asymmetries) that shape couples' work-family strategies. Moreover, these approaches cannot capture the intra-couple negotiation processes, focusing instead on their realized outcomes. At the same time, the role of contextual factors, specifically firm-level working conditions, in shaping intra-couple dynamics remains underexplored. Although workplace policies such as flexibility or overtime requirements are known to affect employees' work-family balance, existing research largely treats individuals in isolation, overlooking how such conditions may influence partners' responses. This study addresses these gaps using a factorial survey experiment with a dyadic design. Couples evaluate experimentally varied promotion scenarios that differ in key working conditions, allowing identification of how specific company policies shape intended adjustments in partners' paid and unpaid work. We use matched mirrored vignettes, inspired by Abraham et al. (2010): in each couple, one person is the prospective promotee, and the other evaluates the same scenario as their partner. This enables direct assessment of which working conditions trigger more traditional or egalitarian adaptive strategies, the role of gender, and the degree of alignment or conflict between partners' responses. By offering identical promotion incentives across genders and randomizing policy features, the design disentangles the impacts of gender and employment prospects and isolates workplace effects from selection-based confounding. The presentation will focus on the research design and the results of a pilot study, which are expected to be available by the time of the conference. The survey platform has yet to be finalized, given the specific requirement of linking partners.

Negotiating Who Cares: A Conjoint Experiment to Explore Couples' Attitudes Towards Decision Routines When Caring for a Sick Child

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The abstract describes a conjoint experiment on dual-earner parents' attitudes towards decision routines for sick child care. When a child gets sick, and alternative caregivers cannot step in, dual-earner parents face an immediate dilemma: someone has to stay home, but who (Clawson & Gerstel 2014)? In Germany, parents have a legal right to take time off to care for their sick children, yet child-sick care (CSC) remains highly unequally distributed. We argue that deciding who will care for a sick child may be less a matter of economic resources and policies than of implicit rules, norms, and societal expectations. Conjoint experiments are ideal for studying parental trade-offs and gender inequality in CSC by disentangling multiple factors and uncovering normative standards. As part of a project, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), we will conduct an online survey with a conjoint experiment to explore what drives working parents' decisions when a child is ill, followed by questions on participants' own experiences with and attitudes toward CSC. In the experiment, participants view pairs of virtual profiles side-by-side in a table and respond to a forced-choice question (Who do you think cares for the sick child?) and then rate how stressful it would be for the parent to not go to work. Each profile outlines parents across six dimensions (Income, working hours per week, employment contract, work responsibilities, flexible working hours, working place), with attributes varying across two to five levels, fully randomized within subjects, and the order of attributes randomized between subjects. This way, we gather insights into respondents' decisions in virtual couple negotiations and their judgments of adequacy concerning these cases. These judgments are not, as such, representations of the respondent's factual practices but reflect the normative standards guiding them. Socio-demographic details collected for each respondent show how closely the virtual parents align with the respondent's characteristics. This study contributes empirically by filling a data gap on CSC in Germany and advancing research on gender-role ideologies and how they translate into normative expectations about parental caregiving — contributing to the broader agenda of understanding "why children are key to understanding gender inequality" (Cortès & Pan 2020: 15). Methodologically, it demonstrates how conjoint experiments reveal hidden attitudinal patterns sustaining gender inequality in family life. Data Collection is planned for early 2027, with initial pretest results expected at the conference.

Income, Contract Uncertainty, and Fertility: Experimental Evidence from Czechia

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This study examines how income levels and employment uncertainty shape perceived prerequisites for parenthood. While conventional wisdom suggests that employment instability leads couples to postpone childbearing, empirical evidence for this relationship remains mixed. Over the past two decades, the perceived income prerequisites for having children have increased substantially. Drawing on data from a factorial survey experiment conducted in Czechia in 2024 (n = 2,990 respondents aged 18-49), we analyse how income, temporary employment contracts, childcare availability, and housing tenure influence perceptions of readiness for parenthood. Our experimental design allows us to disentangle the relative importance of these economic factors in shaping fertility-related judgments. Results reveal four key findings: (1) low income represents the primary obstacle to fertility, (2) women's low earnings pose less of a barrier than men's, (3) housing costs, rather than renting per se, constitute a significant impediment, and (4) high income does not mitigate the negative effects of employment uncertainty. These findings contribute to the understanding of how economic precarity and rising costs shape contemporary perceptions of what is necessary before having children.

Social inequalities

Thursday 27 August, 9:00-10:30, Room K.008

Inequality Frames: Heterogeneity in Explanations of Gender Inequality

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Despite widespread disapproval of gender discrimination and the unequal treatment of women, attitudes toward gender-unequal outcomes is more mixed. Inequality of outcomes is typically condemned when seen as the product of unequal opportunity rather than individual choice. However, research has yet to establish to what extent and under what conditions people attribute gender inequality in outcomes to structural vs. individual causes. In this study, I first examine which causes people perceive as the primary explanation for existing gender inequality, providing respondents with five choice options representing a range of individual and structural explanations derived from prior literature. These include overt discrimination, socialized preferences, and differences in competence. Because people may attribute inequality to multiple causes, I also examine what proportion of inequality people attribute to each cause. Finally, I posit that inequality attributions may be situationally dependent, varying across different groups of women. Given the way that racial and gender stereotypes intersect in the U.S. context, I anticipate that women's racial backgrounds will shape both the primary explanations and distributions of explanations that respondents provide. I examine these three questions using an online survey experiment. Respondents read a paragraph and view a graph highlighting the gender wage gap. In the control condition, no information about race is provided. In four treatment conditions, I manipulate the prime to focus on women who are 1) White, 2) Black, 3) Hispanic/Latina, or 4) Asian, emphasizing that there remains a gap among these women and their male counterparts. Then, respondents select from five possible explanations for this gender wage gap. They are first asked what they believe to be the primary cause and then asked to determine what proportion of the wage gap each explanation accounts for. Respondents are also able to provide additional explanations in an open-ended response question. The full study is scheduled to be fielded in Summer 2026. Preliminary results from a pilot study (fielded on Prolific in April 2026, N = 285) suggest that although ongoing discrimination is most often cited as the primary explanation for the gender wage gap across all treatment groups, men's perceived greater competence is disproportionately relied on for non-White women, socialization is relied on more for Asian women, and historical discrimination is invoked much more often for White women. The full study will include additional analyses of the distributions of explanations and interactions with respondent characteristics. This study provides both descriptive data on general perceptions of what drives gender inequality and causal data on how racial stereotypes shape these perceptions. Understanding this is especially important because the explanations on which people rely shape which policy interventions they believe are fair and are willing to endorse. Accordingly, the findings contribute to sociological theories of stereotypes, legitimacy, and group processes. Although conducted in the American context, this study's findings may hold implications for countries with similar histories of gender inequality. More broadly, by demonstrating how gender inequality attributions depend on women's identities, this research offers theoretical insights that can apply across a range of contexts.

Career Decisions: Socioeconomic Differences in Students' Job Preferences and Perceived Accessibility

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Despite achieving higher education, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds remain underrepresented in elite occupations. What role do individual preferences and perceived accessibility play in shaping early career decisions among university students from different socio-economic backgrounds (SES)? While demand-side explanations, such as hiring discrimination, have received considerable attention, supply-side factors, particularly job preferences and perceptions of access, are equally important. Yet little is known about how these factors interact with SES to shape application behavior. It remains unclear whether high-SES students gravitate toward certain job types to maintain status, or whether low-SES students are systematically discouraged by anticipated barriers such as social mismatch, financial pressure, or lower self-efficacy. To address this question, we conducted a large-scale discrete-choice experiment in December 2025 as part of a survey of Swiss university students (for more information, see: www.careerpaths.ch). Students from both traditional and applied universities, enrolled in Bachelor's and Master's programs, evaluated three pairs of hypothetical job profiles in a forced-choice format. The job profiles systematically vary across key attributes, including salary, prestige, job stability, promotion prospects, and requirements for success. This design allows us to disentangle the relative importance of material incentives, symbolic rewards, and structural features in shaping job preferences. In addition, we assess how students' perceptions of feasibility, such as expected fit with the work environment, likelihood of success, and acceptable waiting time, interact with these preferences. The data collection has recently been completed, and I expect to present preliminary analyses at the ACES 2026 Conference. Using conditional and mixed logit models, we aim to estimate the impact of job attributes and their interactions with SES on early career choices. Mediation analyses will further examine how perceived constraints shape application behavior. By focusing on university students who hold (or are about to obtain) a tertiary degree, this study isolates the role of socioeconomic background beyond formal educational attainment. In doing so, it sheds light on how cumulative advantages and disadvantages operate even among individuals with similar credentials. The findings will provide causal evidence on how SES-based preferences and perceived barriers shape early labor market entry, contributing to debates on supply-side mechanisms underlying socioeconomic inequalities in access to high-status professional roles. More broadly, the study advances our understanding of how social origins continue to structure early-career trajectories, potentially amplifying inequalities over the life course even when education levels are equal.

Income inequality, sense of justice, and demand for redistribution: Insights from a survey experiment based on visual depictions of income inequality

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As income inequality within societies continues to rise, its effects are coming to the foreground of political and social debates. Previous research on the empirical link between objective income inequality and societal reaction is extensive, but it yields ambiguous results and often neglects the question of what form and extent of income inequality is socially acceptable. Based on theories on social comparisons and distributive justice, rising income inequality should decrease perceived justice and increase public demand for redistribution. Since people tend to compare themselves with those above in the social hierarchy, we further expect people to react stronger to inequality driven by higher income quintiles. However, acknowledging that humans care about others' minimum standard of living, incomes of the lowest quintile in the distribution likely also affect their assessment. Using a factorial survey experiment with 1,176 respondents in Germany, we demonstrate how visual depictions of income inequality influence perceived justice and demand for redistribution. More specifically, this approach allows us not only to examine the effects of common single measures of overall income inequality, such as the Gini coefficient, but also to determine which parts of the income distribution inequality, that is, which income quintiles, have a particularly strong impact on people's assessments. Our multilevel models show that evaluations of income distributions are not merely driven by aggregate inequality but are highly sensitive to the shape of that distribution. An increasing Gini index significantly reduces perceived justice and increases demands for redistribution. Crucially, this effect is non-linear; the negative impact on justice perceptions accelerates at higher levels of inequality. A detailed examination of inequality within the income distribution shows that there is a significant negative impact of income inequality on perceived justice in the upper range of the income distribution and that these coefficients increase in magnitude as the income difference between two neighboring income quintiles increases. We find the same relationships with regard to the intention to redistribute, but with positive coefficients. Our key finding is therefore that the higher up the social income distribution inequality occurs and the more pronounced it is, the stronger the impact on the evaluation of distributions. These results suggest that the perceived justice is calibrated specifically toward income disparities among top earners rather than general dispersion across the whole distribution. Furthermore, analysis shows no significant differences in the effects of unemployment benefits on perceptions of justice and redistribution intentions between situations with high or low income inequality, meaning that we cannot identify any moderation of the institutional context in our analysis. This study provides insights into the potential and feasibility of using graphical vignettes in income inequality research, as well as a detailed look at the strength of the effects of inequality at different points along the income distribution. This expands existing inequality research by adding a method that can examine not only the consequences of a single inequality measure, but also the effects of inequality at different points in the income distribution.

Are inequality concerns contagious? The effect of descriptive norms on opportunity beliefs

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Previous studies demonstrate that individuals' tolerance for economic disparities relies heavily on their beliefs about the origins of unequal outcomes. When disparities are perceived as stemming from an uneven playing field, concerns increase. Conversely, perceptions of a level playing fields foster acceptance of inequality. Although people are frequently misinformed about actual inequality, providing transparent information about unequal opportunity leads individuals to strongly oppose unequal allocations and view resulting economic inequality as unfair (McCall et al. 2017). However, this existing body of work predominantly emphasizes personal exposure to inequality, assuming that individuals process information and form stratification beliefs in isolation and, therefore, largely overlooking the powerful role of social information in shaping beliefs about economic opportunity. To address this gap, this study introduces a pre-registered experiment to investigate whether concerns about the distribution of opportunity are socially contagious. We examine how exposure to descriptive norms influences attributions of economic success by testing three central hypotheses. First, replicating McCall et al. (2017), we hypothesize that exposure to factual information about rising income inequality increases the perceived importance of structural factors for getting ahead (e.g., family wealth) while reducing the emphasis placed on individual traits (e.g., ambition, hard work) (H1). Second, we posit that a “reinforcing” descriptive norm, highlighting widespread societal concern about inequality, amplifies these baseline effects, further increasing the salience of structural factors and decreasing individual factors (H2). Third, we hypothesize that an “assuaging” norm—minimizing societal concern—will have the opposite effect, reducing the salience of structural explanations and elevating individual traits as more important factors (H3). We conducted an online experiment with 2,075 participants, replicating the experimental design used by McCall et al. (2017). In our baseline condition, participants read an article detailing after-tax income growth across economic groups from 1979 to 2021, compared against a structurally matched control article about baseball. We then introduced two descriptive norm manipulations alongside the baseline inequality article. The reinforcing norm condition informed participants that 60% of Americans consider high economic inequality a major problem. Conversely, the assuaging norm condition stated that 60% of Americans do not consider it a major problem. Our analyses yield robust support for our baseline hypothesis (H1). Exposure to information about rising inequality significantly increases the perceived importance of structural factors and reduces reliance on individual traits, successfully replicating McCall et al. (2017). Furthermore, our results provide partial support for our normative hypotheses (H2 and H3). Exposure to the reinforcing norm significantly decreases participants' reliance on individual factors to explain success, with no supplementary impact on structural factors. Conversely, exposure to the assuaging norm significantly reduces the importance participants place on structural factors, without affecting the weight given to individual traits. Ultimately, our findings demonstrate that beliefs about economic opportunity are not formed in an informational vacuum. Instead, individual responses to inequality are socially contagious and significantly influenced by perceptions of what others think, highlighting the fundamentally social nature of inequality beliefs.

Methodology of experimentation

Thursday 27 August, 11:00-12:30, Room K.011

The theory of use and abuse of deception in experimental research

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The use of deception in experimental research is highly controversial, and different norms are upheld in different scientific fields. Social psychologists regard deception as a very important methodological tool that allows effective manipulation of the participants' beliefs and a high degree of experimental control. By contrast, economists maintain a strict ban on the use of deception, although they typically take a more lenient position on "implicit" deception (i.e., lying by omission). The debate generally centers on the consequences of deception for the reputation of the scientific community and the credibility of experimental protocols within the participants' population. Ethical concerns are also mentioned, but they are rarely presented as a key argument for or against the use of deception. Given the consequentialist nature of the debate, theoretical arguments and assumptions, upon which opposing claims are based, should be examined in the light of empirical evidence. Yet, the theoretical assumptions that support the usefulness of either banning or allowing deception have received very little attention in the literature. In this paper, I discuss two theoretical models representing the interaction between researchers and participants, compare the models' assumptions and implications with respect to the most common forms of deception, as they are classified in the literature, and explore the consequences of using different forms of deception in different experimental settings, in light of the two models.

Separating the impact of luck and agency on outcomes

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Despite advancements in data availability and statistical technique, the capacity of sociological models to explain empirical outcomes is much lower than we might expect. There are many reasons for this: measurement error, incorrectly-specified models, incomplete theories. We suggest another important factor: luck. We are accustomed to think of luck, if we think of it at all, as noise external to theories. In this paper, we build on a small but growing literature that seeks to understand luck as a substantive sociological phenomenon in its own right. Sociologists are familiar with the distinction between structure and agency. To the degree that social outcomes are structured, they should be explicable by sociological theory; to the degree they are explicable, they should be predictable. Persistently inexplicable outcomes therefore tend to be attributed to agency – the sovereign and free choice of individuals. But unpredictable outcomes may also be attributed to luck rather than agency. Luck, we argue, constitutes a third pole outside the structure-agency spectrum. Being random, luck cannot be subsumed under structure. Being outside of individual control, luck cannot be attributed to agency. In practice, distinguishing between agency and luck is difficult, partly because we lack a theoretically developed and empirically tested conceptualisation of luck. In this paper we aim to address this issue by asking: how much of unexplained variance is due to agency, and how much to luck? Our empirical approach is to study "outlier-ness" in population.

Fields that study – say – marriage, fertility, job change, or other life course outcomes will have mature literatures in which standard explanatory and statistical models will have emerged. Since R-squareds are never 100%, there are always outliers, and individuals vary in their "outlier-ness". Some are very close in realised outcome to their predicted value, whereas some are very far. Assuming that our standard models are close to identifying the main structural determinants of life outcomes, outlier-ness must be caused by a mixture of agency, luck, and measurement error. Leaving aside the third element, we aim to study how much of outlier-ness is caused by agency and how much by luck. We aim to use the Dutch Longitudinal Internet Social Survey panel (LISS), which is connected to Dutch registry data, to run standard life course models predicting outlier-ness in individuals across multiple dimensions. LISS also hosts studies proposed by third party researchers. We will run such a study, sampling panellists with low, medium, and high outlier-ness. Then, using structured and open questions, we will estimate how much of outlier-ness is attributable to luck versus agency. Besides being of substantive interest, the proposed study is also relevant to social scientists employing experimental methodologies. Luck is a product of randomness, and hence can be considered as a regularly occurring series of natural experiments – outlier-ness is partly a result of (multiple) random treatments. This study helps us to understand how common such experiments are, potentially opening the way for transforming methodological concepts into sociological theory.

A Methodological Review and Practical Agenda for Experimental Social Sciences in Latin America

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The "credibility revolution" (Angrist & Pischke, 2010) has established experimental methods as central tools for causal inference. However, experimental sociology remains disproportionately concentrated in the Global North, heavily relying on WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) populations (Henrich et al., 2010). Latin America (LATAM) presents a theoretically rich laboratory for testing sociological phenomena of global interest, such as structural inequality and informality. Yet, the region faces systemic financial and methodological barriers to locally-led experimental research. This project presents an ongoing systematic methodological review of experimental studies focused on Latin America across sociology, economics, and political science. Leveraging the Web of Science, our initial search targeted a comprehensive universe of nearly 900 journals, yielding a curated corpus of 602 experimental articles published between 1992 and 2026. Our extraction strategy utilizes a comprehensive set of keywords capturing field experiments, conjoints, vignettes, and audit studies. Crucially, our analytical framework relies on the intersection of two distinct dimensions: research about the region (thematic focus) and research produced by regional institutions (author affiliation), allowing us to accurately measure the extent of regional scientific output. Our preliminary findings reveal at least two dynamics. First, we identify a marked disciplinary division. Political Science and Sociology currently represent the majority of this corpus (comprising 51% and 34%, respectively), with Economics accounting for 15%. Across these fields, we observe varying methodological preferences. The reliance on resource-intensive field interventions coexists with a strong preference for population-based survey and conjoint designs. Second, by crossing thematic and affiliation data, we found a clear geographical imbalance. Even though these studies test theories on Latin American populations—most often in Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia—83% of the research is led by principal investigators based in the Global North. This highlights a persistent gap between the regional focus of the experiments and the institutional location of the primary researchers. By exploring the experimental research being conducted in the region, this project aims to open a broader discussion on how to foster these methods in the social sciences, particularly in sociology. As we move forward, our analysis will systematically identify the main thematic areas, trace their evolution over time, and map the specific experimental designs deployed. Moving beyond descriptive bibliometrics, we will use these empirical insights to develop a methodological toolkit tailored to the LATAM context. This practical agenda seeks to expand access to experimental methods, provide ideas for local application, and address region-specific limitations. For instance, we reflect on how everyday regional realities—such as educational gaps or varying levels of digital access—can shape the way we design surveys, present scenarios, and evaluate data quality. Ultimately, our aim is to highlight the value of these methods and encourage a more horizontal, collaborative exchange that supports endogenous research in the Global South.

Internal and external validity reconsidered: eliminating extraneous factors, understanding support factors

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The expressions “internal validity” and “external validity” were introduced in the late 1950s. The underlying concepts form the core of the methodology of experimentation as commonly understood and routinely practiced by most social science experimenters today. The idea that an experiment as a whole (or its results) can be “valid” is originally an extrapolation of the notion that a measurement instrument can be “accurate” At some point in the past, then, the methodology of experimentation had not yet heard from internal and external validity, and this language sounded odd and overstretched. In contrast, today these ideas are so familiar that their meanings seem obvious. They are not.

After clarifying the logically asymmetric ideas of internal and external validity, we propose a renewed understanding of the latter. In this revised conception in tune with mechanism-based explanations and middle-range theorizing, the assessment of the external validity of an experiment starts with the recognition that every causal link necessarily depends for its operation on a host of enabling or support factors that must be set at the “right” level. In this light, the quest for a general “main effect” that operates independently from everything else reveals itself to be hopeless. The metric of external validity ceases to be the (necessarily limited) generality of a causal link to become the depth of understanding of its enabling conditions.

Misinformation

Thursday 27 August, 11:00-12:30, Room K.008

Testing Provenance Tagging and Exploring Motivations for Sharing

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To slow the spread of misinformation and its negative consequences, prior work has proposed and tested various interventions. We contribute to the literature on source-credibility labels by testing a new startup-developed provenance tag and manipulating its informational load. Additionally, we measure participants' motivations for sharing (and not sharing) information, which is rarely explored in prior work. When toggled, the tag displays certified information on the tagged post, such as its author, whether it is AI-produced, and its truthfulness. We test two versions of the same provenance tag. A short version contains only essential information about the post. While less informative and less convincing, this version is easier to access and requires less cognitive effort. The other version, longer and more informative, is more cognitively demanding to process. In the first part of the experiment, participants are asked about their propensity to share five existing and validated social media posts, while in the second part, they are asked to judge the veracity of five additional posts. In each round, the procedure randomly selects which post to show, whether it is tagged, and which version (short or long) of the tag to use. Sharing motivations are measured via an open-text box after each of the first five rounds. In addition to measuring the effectiveness of the tag and the impact of its two versions, we assess whether the average effect varies with participants' characteristics (e.g., demographics, news consumption, media literacy and cognitive style) and motivations for sharing.

Cultural Consistency as A Predictor of Sharing and Engaging With Misinformation and Inciting News

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The pervasiveness of misinformation and inciting news online challenges democratic societies' assumption of voting and conflict resolution based on accurate information and through democratic processes. Given the remarkable success of such information in spreading through online communities (Vicario et al. 2016; Vosoughi, Roy, and Aral 2018), a burgeoning literature investigates the reasons for their virality (cf. Pennycook and Rand 2021; van der Linden 2022). Much of this literature focuses on the online environments and users generating valuable insights about who shares misinformation and how platforms contribute to this, while the role of the nature and content of the stories shared remains less well understood. The experimental design we propose to present, instead, shifts the focus to the content itself to understand engagement with misinformation and inciting news. We combine insights from research about the familiarity heuristic in sharing of misinformation (Pennycook and Rand 2021) with Affect Control Theory (ACT) (Robinson and Smith-Lovin 2018) which provides a framework to operationalize and measure familiarity as consistency with cultural schemas. ACT captures these schemas as a set of roles (mother, shop lifter, professor), behaviors (nurture, steal, lecture), and associated equations to quantify expected (familiar) or unexpected (unfamiliar) narratives. This familiarity

operationalization has been shown to be predictive of which elements readers recall and retell in fictive stories (Hunzaker 2016).
We will present a research design that uses the ACT operationalization of familiarity as cultural consistency in an experiment on a simulated news platform. The design varies the cultural consistency (low or high) in synthetic news stories derived from a set of stories identified as misinformation by major fact checking organizations. In this way, we propose to test the prediction that familiarity has a curvilinear effect on engagement, where banal and outlandish stories are disregarded or discounted whereas just-so-believable stories capture audience attention and engagement. The design will develop measure to capture (i) whether participants share the story and (ii) whether they engage with it by commenting or reporting it.

The role of attention in misinformation sharing

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Dual-process theories have helped explain how cognitive abilities shape misinformation sharing. In general, individuals who are more likely to engage in reflective, effortful (System 2) reasoning are more likely to tell true and false information apart (Pennycook-Rand, 2019), and less likely to share inaccurate content than those who rely more on heuristic (System 1) processing (Tu et al., 2023). However, far less is known about such behavioral factors, like the role of attention, understood here as the focus of mental effort, invested in processing content. Our research addresses this gap by asking whether such mental effort leads people to distinguish between true and false news more when deciding what to share. We operationalize attention through two measures: the time spent evaluating a news item and behavioral engagement with the content (Oeldorf-Hirsch, 2018), such as clicking on a "more" button for additional information. Drawing on a large cross-national dataset (N = 34,336) from 20 countries, we find that individuals who are generally more attentive when evaluating veracity distinguish more between true and false news in their sharing decisions than those who are less attentive overall. These patterns could be interpreted through dual-process theories: general attentiveness may reflect a greater tendency to engage in more deliberative (System 2) processing. By contrast, excessively high levels of attention relative to a person's baseline is associated in our data with lower willingness to share, especially claims that are true. A possible interpretation is that, in relatively difficult tasks, more elaborate (System 2) processing may coincide with lower confidence (see Alter et al., 2007). Beyond actual veracity, we also examine how attention shapes discernment between information perceived as true or false in sharing decisions. Our analyses show that generally attentive individuals are also more likely to distinguish between content they perceive as true and false in their sharing behavior. At the same time, excessive attention weakens the role of veracity judgments, largely because it sharply reduces the sharing of content perceived to be true. This pattern again suggests that difficult judgments may imply uncertainty alongside System 2 reasoning, thereby discouraging sharing. Overall, our findings advance our understanding of misinformation sharing by showing how it depends on the mental effort they invest when engaging with information.

Accuracy Salience in Misinformation Sharing: Evidence from a Multi-Country Survey Experiment

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This study investigates whether prompting individuals to consider accuracy before sharing content reduces misinformation circulation and whether this effect varies with individual ability. Using data from the OECD Truth Quest, a multi-country survey experiment fielded across more than 20 countries with approximately 35,000 respondents, we estimate the causal effect of accuracy salience on willingness to share claims in a simulated social media environment. Respondents first evaluated 28 true and false claims for veracity, then reported sharing intentions for a subset of previously seen and unseen claims. We find that prior accuracy evaluation reduces the probability of sharing by approximately 2–3 percentage points. However, this effect is strongest among respondents with higher overall accuracy and false-claim detection ability, suggesting that accuracy nudges are most effective when individuals already possess the cognitive tools to act on them. The effect is also moderated by perceived veracity: salience reduces sharing of content believed to be false but increases sharing of content believed to be true, suggesting that nudges may amplify pre-existing beliefs rather than uniformly improve the quality of information shared online.

Politics & Norms

Thursday 27 August, 13:45-15:30, Room K.011

NB: This session is deliberately 15 minutes longer

Social Norms of In-Group Favoritism across Political and Non-Political Identity Domains

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Why is in-group favoritism evaluated differently across political and non-political identity domains? This paper examines whether such differences are linked to the extent to which identities are perceived as chosen (achieved) or given (ascribed). Focusing on Spain—a context with salient partisan, religious, and sporting divides—we combine evidence from two laboratory experiments (N = 168; N = 155) and a nationally representative survey experiment (N = 3,015) to compare social norms governing in-group favoritism across multiple identity domains. Across all studies, we find that in-group favoritism is consistently judged more socially acceptable in domains perceived as more voluntary—such as politics and football fandom—than in domains more strongly associated with ascribed characteristics, such as gender and religion. Experimental results show that while equal allocations are generally considered most appropriate, deviations favoring the in-group are penalized more strongly in ascribed domains. These patterns are robust across incentivized and non-incentivized designs and extend to a broader set of identities, including education and nationality, which occupy intermediate positions along an ascribed–achieved continuum. Our findings challenge the view that partisan identity is normatively unique. Instead, political identity aligns closely with other achieved identities in exhibiting weaker social norms against discrimination. The results suggest that individuals may perceive greater moral responsibility—and thus greater permissibility of differential treatment—in contexts where group membership is seen as a matter of choice. Conversely, stronger norms constrain favoritism when identities are viewed as less controllable. By systematically comparing multiple identity domains within a unified experimental framework, this study provides new evidence on how social norms regulating intergroup behavior vary across contexts. More broadly, it highlights the importance of considering the perceived voluntariness of identities in understanding when and why in-group favoritism is socially tolerated.

Cohesion across divides: coalition heterogeneity and partisan identity among supporters of the Rassemblement National

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In many contemporary democracies, political identities have become increasingly affective and socially meaningful. A growing body of research shows that when partisan identities align with other social divides (such as class, religion, ethnicity, or place of residence) political conflict becomes more intense and personal, contributing to increased intergroup hostility. Yet recent political developments present an apparent paradox: several political movements have successfully mobilized electorates that cut across traditional social divisions. This raises an important question for the study of social identities: how can a political identity remain subjectively coherent and emotionally meaningful when its supporters are socially heterogeneous? This paper examines this question through the case of the Rassemblement National (RN) in France. Historically associated

with a relatively narrow electorate, the party has recently broadened its support base across diverse social groups, including younger voters, segments of the working and middle classes, urban residents, and individuals from varied cultural backgrounds. Existing research has largely focused on explaining why voters support radical right parties. Less attention has been paid to how supporters themselves cognitively reconcile potentially cross-pressured social identities within heterogeneous political coalitions. I investigate this process using a pre-registered survey experiment conducted on a sample of approximately 2,000 adult respondents in France. Participants are randomly assigned to one of three conditions: (1) a vignette describing the RN electorate as socially heterogeneous, including supporters from diverse social backgrounds; (2) a vignette portraying the RN electorate as socially homogeneous and aligned with commonly perceived stereotypes of the party's supporters; or (3) a neutral control condition unrelated to partisan politics. The experiment tests whether exposure to information about coalition heterogeneity affects how individuals perceive the boundaries of the partisan ingroup and the compatibility of different social identities with partisan affiliation. Two mechanisms are examined. The first, identity congruence relief, proposes that exposure to a heterogeneous coalition reduces perceived pressure to conform to stereotypical expectations of what a typical supporter should be like, thereby allowing individuals to affirm potentially counter-stereotypical identities without perceiving them as incompatible with their partisan attachment. The second mechanism, ingroup updating, suggests that recognizing the presence of diverse supporters expands perceived ingroup boundaries and increases affective warmth toward social groups that might otherwise appear distant from the partisan community. Outcome measures include self-reported identification with several social groups that are not typically associated with the RN electorate and affective evaluations toward those same groups. The main analyses focus on respondents who identify with the RN, while additional exploratory analyses examine effects among other respondents. By experimentally manipulating representations of coalition composition, this study contributes to research on social identity, affective polarization, and the foundations of partisan cohesion. More broadly, it sheds light on how political identities can remain cohesive even when they bring together socially diverse constituencies. Fieldwork will begin in spring 2026. The study has received ethics approval and has been pre-registered on the Open Science Framework.

The Conditional Power of Norms: Ingroup Bias and the Acceptance of Protest Violence

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Hungary is witnessing one of the most turbulent and intense electoral campaigns of the past decades. The 2026 elections mark the first time since 2010 that the opposition has a realistic chance of challenging the incumbent non-democratic (illiberal) regime. As the stakes are high, both the governing party (Fidesz) and the main opposition party (Tisza) seek to mobilize and energize their supporters. In this polarized context, hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets to to show their party is strong and able to mobilise large masses. In this tense and heated situation, how does the public evaluate aggressive protest behavior? Specifically, this paper asks whether the norm of nonviolence in protest holds under high affective and ideological polarization, and whether adherence to this norm reduces acceptance of escalatory tactics. To address this question, we conducted an online survey experiment in Hungary in 2026 (N = 2000). Respondents were randomly assigned to one of six treatment conditions in which they watched a short, fictitious news-style video depicting a protest event associated either with the governing party (Fidesz) or the opposition (Tisza). The treatments varied along two dimensions: (1) the level of protesters' aggression toward illegal counter-protesters (verbal hostility, commotion, or physical violence), and (2) whether the protesters belonged to the respondent's ingroup or outgroup. Following the video, respondents reported their support for the protest, their acceptance of the protesters' behavior, their general acceptance of political violence, and their attitudes toward banning the protest. We examine whether evaluations become more negative as protest tactics escalate in violence and whether respondents are more lenient toward ingroup aggression. We further assess whether these patterns are conditioned by individuals' normative rejection of aggression. The broader aim is to understand whether normative commitments moderate the effects of protesters' aggression and group alignment, shaping how citizens evaluate these actions and support protesters depending on both who performs them and their own normative orientations. Preliminary results indicate that normative rejection of aggression is negatively associated with the acceptance of both aggressive protest behavior and general political violence more, but it does not significantly predict support for protest. At the same time, we find that norms matter primarily in the evaluation of outgroup behavior: when protesters belong to the outgroup, normative attitudes significantly shape acceptance of aggression. Overall, group alignment appears to be a stronger determinant than normative commitments in explaining the acceptance of aggressive protest. Normative constraints thus operate conditionally, becoming salient particularly when norm violations are attributed to political opponents (supporters of the outgroup).

Watching the Enemy: How Partisan Outgroups Drive Engagement with Policy Issues
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Which issues become politically salient? Existing research emphasizes policy substance: people engage more with issues that affect them directly or that they consider urgent (Mummolo 2016; Bolsen & Leeper 2013). Yet engagement patterns frequently diverge from stated concerns, with heated conflict also centering on issues citizens themselves rank as low priority. This paper argues that who proposes an issue, not just content, shapes which issues attract attention: associating a policy proposal with a disliked partisan outgroup may raise engagement with peripheral issues. Partisan hostility has intensified without a corresponding increase in policy disagreement between ordinary citizens (Dias & Lelkes 2022; Iyengar et al. 2019; Mason 2018), suggesting political conflict may increasingly be more about group identity rather than substantive policy disagreement. Consistent with this, research finds that outgroup references are the strongest predictor of engagement with political content on social media — substantially stronger than emotional or moral language (Rathje et al. 2021; Cheng et al. 2026). However, this evidence is largely observational, U.S.-focused, and conflates party references with evaluative language. Whether the party label itself causally increases engagement, and whether this operates in the context of a European multiparty system where positive partisan identification is weaker but affective hostility is substantial (Harteveld et al. 2021; Gidron et al. 2023), remains unanswered. I test this using a conjoint survey experiment in Germany. Participants complete a pre-treatment ranking of policy domains by perceived urgency. In the main task, 12 policy proposals are presented as pairwise choices, each randomly assigned to one of four parties (CDU, SPD, Greens, AfD), held constant within but varied between respondents, so that party labels map onto individual outgroup, ingroup, and neutral categories based on pre-treatment feeling thermometer responses. For each pair, participants indicate which they would share or click on for further information, with the question randomized across pairs. A post-test measures perceived plausibility of party-policy combinations to assess whether effects are driven by the outgroup cue or by surprise at implausible pairings, and includes policy evaluations to examine whether party labels shift policy interpretation. The primary contribution is a clean causal estimate of whether outgroup labels increase engagement with policy content, holding substance constant. Varying both the policy and party also enables a within-respondent test of whether outgroup effects are disproportionately strong for issues the individual does not otherwise prioritize. Two mechanisms are proposed and examined exploratorily. A threat-based account predicts information-seeking about credibly threatening proposals, manifesting as clicking and scaling with pairing plausibility. An identity-based account predicts amplification for social positioning purposes, manifesting as sharing and scaling with party dislike regardless of credibility. By situating the study in Germany, where asymmetric outgroup hostility is particularly pronounced, the paper extends the largely U.S.-based literature on affective polarization to a multiparty setting where negative partisanship operates under fundamentally different structural conditions. More broadly, if partisan outgroup cues shape which issues feel worthy of engagement, they may also contribute to explaining why political conflict increasingly expands into issue domains that are not central to actors' core priorities.

Intimidation through government surveillance of communications? Experimental evidence on the chilling effect, from an interdisciplinary point of view

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State surveillance is a highly controversial topic and the subject of heated debate, both in legal discourse and in society. Recent examples of this discussion include the so-called “Chat Control” legislation at the EU level, and national programs, such as the use of the “Staatstrojaner” in Germany. How can legislators and constitutional courts decide which measures can be accepted in a democratic society, and which measures should be used only to a limited extent because their negative effects on fundamental rights and the democratic society are too great? The presentation analyses the effects of state surveillance from an interdisciplinary perspective drawing on sociology and law. From a sociological point of view, there already exists a considerable number of studies on public opinion and acceptance of government surveillance, including both survey studies (e.g. Trüdinger and Steckermeier 2017; Davis and Silver 2004) and experimental designs (e.g. Ziller and Helbling 2021; Antoine 2022). However, we do know little about the potential consequences of government surveillance in terms of behavior. The question of behavior is important not only from a sociological point of view, but also from a legal point of view. When the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany the “Bundesverfassungsgericht”, reviews the constitutionality of surveillance laws, executive actions, or court decisions, it sometimes also assesses the “chilling effects” that may result from the surveillance measure (e.g. in relation to communication: BVerfGE 100, 313 (381); 109, 279 (354), 120, 274 (323); 120, 378 (402f)). The term “chilling effects”, describes “the idea that laws, regulations, or state surveillance can deter people from exercising their freedoms or engaging in legal activities on the internet” (Penney 2017). They are described as the result of fear of decontextualization and recontextualization of information once it has been collected by the state (Schwabenbauer 2013, 143f). Chilling effects pose a threat for democratic societies, because they might lead to behavioral changes and adjustments that deter people from exercising their freedom of speech (Büscher et al. 2023; Penney 2017). The chilling effects, however, are subject to critical discussion in legal literature (Staben, 2017, 69ff.). One aspect that is called into question is the lack of empirical evidence of its existence (e.g. Staben 2017, 121). We will present evidence from an interdisciplinary, factorial survey experiment with over 1,000 respondents, conducted in Germany in 2025, which studies the effects of the legal and institutional design of a hypothetical surveillance measure that targets private smartphones. The experiment was designed collaboratively, with expertise from law and social sciences. Both perspectives will be present in the presentation. The results show that the occurrence of chilling effects depends on the legal and institutional framework governing the suitability of mass surveillance, as well as on the presence or absence of mandatory judicial controls.

Ethnic/Racial discrimination

Thursday 27 August, 13:45-15:30, Room K.008

NB: This session is deliberately 15 minutes longer

Everyday Racial Discrimination: A Field Experiment in the Parisian Métro

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This research project examines everyday racial discrimination through an unobtrusive field experiment set in the anonymous public space of the Parisian metro. It considers differences in proxemic behavior, i.e., the conduct that regulates the physical distance between people, as the measure of race-based discrimination in this setting. This study aims at answering two questions: first, do people discriminate on the grounds of race in everyday public interactions? And second, does discriminatory treatment manifest in the target's lived experience as a perception of discrimination? To address the first question, the experimental research design entailed two male confederates, matched on all characteristics except perceived race (Black and White). They sat in mirroring positions on empty metro carriages at three intra-muros terminal stations in Paris (Lines 2, 5, and 6), thereby creating a choice scenario for random boarding passengers. Over 543 trials conducted during evening rush hours (between 5 and 7 pm), an external coder recorded the seating choices of the first passengers to sit next to one of the confederates, along with their sociodemographic characteristics (perceived gender, age, and race). To address the second question, exploratory post-experimental semi-structured interviews were conducted with the two confederates. This design enables comparison between externally observed discriminatory behavior and the confederates' subjective perceptions of having been discriminated against, addressing a key tension in the literature between claims that targets overestimate discrimination and evidence that, on the contrary, discrimination tends to be under-perceived. Due to its limited samples, related to the constraints of time and resources of a master's thesis, this project was conceived mostly as a pilot study for a potentially larger experiment. Nevertheless, some interesting patterns emerged from analyzing the data. Overall, results reveal significant discrimination against the Black confederate: among passengers who sat, 58% chose the White tester versus 42% the Black tester, a 16-percentage point gap. Discrimination was most pronounced on Line 6, potentially reflecting socio-spatial variations in passenger composition. Notably, passengers classified as Black or as Other Non-White exhibited the strongest preference for the White confederate, a finding that questions notions of ingroup favoritism. Interview data, although limited by the small sample, revealed that the Black confederate, who was in fact the target of discrimination, did not perceive commuters' behavior as discriminatory, thus supporting the fact that when discrimination is subtle, targets are unlikely to identify it. Despite its limitations, this study makes three main contributions: (1) it provides evidence that proxemic racial discrimination operates in Parisian public transport, extending experimental findings on everyday discrimination to a novel behavioral domain; (2) it offers a replicable, unobtrusive methodological template for investigating subtle discrimination in naturalistic settings; and (3) its mixed-methods design attempts to bridge the gap between externally observed discriminatory behavior and the subjective phenomenology of discrimination.

Systemic discrimination in nine European countries: An iterated field experiment in childcare, housing and employment

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Over the past decades, a strong body of literature has found evidence of ethnic and racial discrimination across several life domains, particularly housing (Auspurg et al., 2019) and hiring (Zschirnt & Ruedin, 2016). Discrimination is widespread across European countries (Thijssen et al., 2023) and has shown no sign of progress over time (Heath and Di Stasio, 2019). Survey evidence further reveals that immigrants and their descendants often face discrimination across multiple areas simultaneously, indicating that discrimination has a cumulative impact on their lives.

However, existing studies primarily focus on isolated decision points (e.g., the decision to invite someone for a job interview or to view a house) and thereby fail to adequately capture the extent to which discrimination affects people's lives (Pager & Shepherd, 2008). Not accounting for the interdependence of different life domains and the systemic nature of racial discrimination results in misspecified causal models (Reskin, 2012). While the literature increasingly acknowledges these limitations, to date, empirical research is still struggling to causally identify the systemic nature of discrimination (Brown, Homan and Ray, 2025).

In this study, we aim to measure cumulative discrimination against stigmatised groups across three key life domains, employing an innovative iterated field experimental design. Our research design reflects the intuition that discrimination may accumulate across different life domains in two ways: a) members of ethnic minorities may be exposed to discrimination in several life domains simultaneously (i.e. direct discrimination); and b) the impact of discrimination in one domain can spillover to other domains (i.e. side-effect discrimination), generating patterns of cumulative disadvantage.

In 2024 and 2025, we ran 25 preregistered correspondence audits to examine discrimination against Black, Muslim and Roma families in the domains of childcare, housing and employment in nine different European countries (N = 34,448). The ethnic origin of the senders was signalled through their names, which were carefully selected and externally validated in all countries (Gherkiere et al, 2025). In addition, we included cues of childcare, employment and housing success, e.g. stating a recent promotion, in the correspondence. This allows us to identify both: a) direct discrimination in access to these life domains; and b) how the different life domains are interlinked by looking at the impact of success in one domain on success in other domains (i.e. the cumulation of advantages across domains).

Preliminary findings. Through the randomisation of both ethno-racial cues and signals of domain-specific success across field experiments, we can map systemic discriminatory processes that typically remain hidden in correspondence audits. Our preliminary results reveal that ethnic minority applicants receive significantly fewer positive responses than majority applicants in all three life domains, with discrimination appearing most pronounced in employment. Findings further show some spill-over effects from one domain to another (e.g. signalling employment success increases one's chances in the housing market). This cumulative impact of discrimination is underestimated in conventional experimental designs that do not properly account for cross-domain spillovers.

Subtle Also Counts: Shifting Managers' Attributions, Responses, and Policy Preferences on Workplace Discrimination

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Workplace discrimination remains pervasive across institutional contexts, with well-documented consequences for employees' job outcomes, psychological well-being, and physical health (Dhanani, LaPalme, and Joseph 2021; Jones et al. 2016). Research shows that individuals, including managers, tend to rely on narrow, prototypical definitions of discrimination centered on overt, intentional acts, leading them to overlook more subtle, unintentional forms (Dobbins and Kalev 2016; Jones et al. 2017; Valentino and Warren 2025). This paper asks: Can targeted information provision shift managers' understanding of subtle discrimination, and thereby affect their attributions, intervention intentions, and support for organizational policies? We argue that the recognition of subtle discrimination and its consequences is a critical precondition for both individual-level responses (e.g., intervening in incidents) and structural reforms (e.g., supporting anti-discrimination policies). Managers are key actors in this process: as high-level bystanders, they possess both authority and responsibility to shape workplace climates. However, internalized, narrow definitions of discrimination may lead them to overlook or place less relevance on subtle forms. Building on recent work showing that managers react to information about discrimination definitions and adjust their behavior in a hiring simulation (Tilcsik 2021), we examine whether information about the definition, prevalence and consequences of subtle discrimination can broaden managerial recognition, intentions to intervene and support for policy reforms. We will run a pre-registered survey experiment targeting managers (employees with at least regular supervisory duties) across four European countries (UK, DE, NL, ES) in May 2026. Respondents are exposed to a bundle information treatment embedded in a realistic format (an HR magazine article with references to the meta-analysis by Jones et al. 2016) that emphasizes the following key messages: that subtle discrimination also counts and can even be unintentional (broadening definitions), is common (increasing prevalence), and that it hurts (highlighting consequences). Participants then take the perspective of a bystander that evaluates four vignettes (Auspurg and Hinz 2015) describing fictitious situations at work involving a co-manager and a subordinate. Among other vignette dimensions (e.g. gender and ethnicity of the actors, formality of the situation), we vary the subtlety (overt vs. subtle) and intentionality (intentional vs. unintentional) of the situation. We then test whether managers exposed to information about subtle discrimination are more likely to (1) recognize and (2) respond to subtle and unintentional situations, as well as (3) support policies targeting subtle discrimination compared to managers who do not receive any information (pure control group). We also focus on a stricter comparison between the treated managers and an active control group (Haaland, Roth, and Wohlfart 2023) receiving a very general discrimination treatment designed to increase topic salience without inducing belief change. Additional analyses aim at disentangling which piece of information in our bundle treatment leads to a belief change (pre vs. post-treatment) and whether managers that change their beliefs about the definition (subtlety and intentionality), prevalence and consequences of subtle discrimination show stronger treatment effects.

Unpacking Ethnic Discrimination in Promotion: Evidence from a Causal Mediation Experiment in Japan

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A large body of research has documented ethnic discrimination in hiring decisions, with field and survey experiments showing that minority applicants are less likely to receive callbacks or job offers (Pedulla 2014; Auer et al. 2019; Fossati et al. 2020; Quillian et al. 2017). However, much less is known about whether such discrimination persists beyond hiring and operates in promotion processes. This gap is important, as career advancement within firms is a key mechanism through which labor market inequalities are reproduced. Moreover, existing research has focused on Western contexts (Zschirnt and Ruedin 2016; Baert 2018; Quillian et al. 2019), leaving open whether these frameworks generalize to non-Western settings. This study examines whether immigrants face discrimination in promotion decisions in Japan and investigates the mechanisms behind such disparities. Japan is a relevant case, as it is a nontraditional immigrant destination where the number of foreign workers has increased rapidly and promotion remains structured by long-term employment, seniority-based systems, and internal labor markets (Aoki 1988). Promotion decisions, therefore, represent a critical stage at which inequalities may emerge independently from hiring. Recent evidence shows that foreign workers in Japan face disadvantages in hiring (Igarashi and Mugiyama 2023) and broader labor market outcomes (Korekawa 2019; Holbrow 2020), but promotion processes remain understudied. To address these questions, we conducted a conjoint experiment with 1,089 managers and HR professionals in Japanese firms. Respondents evaluated hypothetical candidates for promotion to an assistant manager position. The design incorporates a causal mediation experiment (Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen 2018), allowing us to estimate the causal effect of nationality on promotion evaluations and identify underlying mechanisms. We compare evaluations under low- and high-information conditions. In the low-information condition, respondents are not provided with information on candidates' performance, leadership characteristics, or willingness for promotion and rely more on implicit beliefs. In the high-information condition, these characteristics are explicitly randomized and presented, breaking the link between nationality and inferred attributes. This design enables us to distinguish between statistical discrimination, in which nationality serves as a proxy for unobserved productivity, and taste-based discrimination, which reflects evaluators' preferences or prejudice (Becker 1957). Using a causal mediation experiment, we show that candidates with non-Japanese nationality receive significantly lower promotion evaluations than Japanese candidates. This nationality penalty persists even when detailed information about candidates' performance, leadership traits, and motivation for promotion is provided. We also find heterogeneous effects across nationalities, with Chinese candidates most penalized and American candidates least. These findings indicate that discrimination cannot be fully explained by productivity-related inferences and are more consistent with taste-based discrimination. Overall, the results demonstrate that discrimination extends beyond hiring into promotion processes and may play a central role in generating labor market inequality. Methodologically, the study highlights the value of combining conjoint analysis with causal mediation designs. It also provides new evidence from a non-Western context and contributes to understanding how well existing theories generalize across institutional settings.

A Taste for Statistical Discrimination

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Research on discrimination has traditionally distinguished between taste-based discrimination, driven by prejudice (Becker, 1957), and statistical discrimination, driven by beliefs about group averages under uncertainty (Arrow, 1971; Phelps, 1972). This distinction assumes that tastes and beliefs are independent. We challenge this assumption by arguing that affective orientations toward social groups can themselves shape belief formation, producing belief-based discrimination that is ultimately rooted in taste. We test this argument in a preregistered online experiment among native-born men in the United Kingdom. Participants are randomly assigned to read an identical vignette in which opposition to abortion is attributed either to British Muslims or to native Britons, creating exogenous variation in affect while holding informational content constant. They then complete a series of incentivized belief-elicitation tasks in which they predict the performance of job candidates. Because participants never interact with candidates, their decisions have no consequences for them, and candidates never observe the evaluations, any treatment effects must operate through beliefs rather than direct discriminatory behavior. The study challenges the conventional separation between taste-based and statistical discrimination and suggests that what appears to be statistical reasoning may instead reflect preference-driven belief formation.

Field experiments in educational settings

Thursday 27 August, 16:00-17:30, Room K.011

Crafting Cohesion: A Field Experiment on Interethnic Contact and Prejudice Reduction in Vocational Training

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Under which conditions can intergroup contact improve outgroup attitudes? Lowe (2025) raises this question in his meta-analysis on 41 pre-registered field experiments, finding that contact interventions show stronger effects in changing attitudes and behaviors towards individuals interacted with than the whole outgroup. Results from this pre-registered field experiment support the argument that contact needs to involve multiple outgroup members to change attitudes (cf. Hewstone & Brown, 1986), while a cooperative setting (Allport, 1954) appears less important. Using a 2×2 factorial design, I independently randomized interethnic contact at a vocational school in two settings across two cohorts (n = 396) over a period of about four weeks. There, I consider the classroom setting with lecture-style teaching as less cooperative and the workshop setting where students practice their craft in small groups as more cooperative. Students count as treated in a setting if any assigned neighbor in each setting had a migration background. This results in four experimental conditions: classroom-only, workshop-only, both settings, and a control group treated in neither setting. The analytical sample consists of students without a migration background with valid information on five items regarding outgroup attitudes on both baseline and endline survey. Contrary to my expectations, neither classroom-only nor workshop-only contact results in detectable attitude changes relative to control and effects from the two single settings do not differ from each other. The null findings for the first hypothesis align with Elwert et al. (2023), while the null for the second challenges the importance of a cooperative setting for contact to be effective. Consistent with my expectations, students treated in both settings show an improvement in outgroup attitudes on a pre-registered z-standardized factor based on five single items (0.28 SD, 95% CI [0.09, 0.47] compared to control, 0.22 SD, 95% CI [0.02, 0.41] compared to other treatment arms). Because the effect from students treated in both settings exceeds the sum of the two single-setting coefficients, a pure dosage explanation is unlikely, pointing instead to exposure to multiple distinct outgroup members as a relevant scope condition. An exploratory analysis recoding the treatment as the number of unique outgroup neighbors supports this interpretation (0.30 SD, 95% CI [0.12, 0.48] compared to control, 0.24 SD, 95% CI [0.05, 0.44] compared to one outgroup neighbor). Together, these results suggest that interethnic contact interventions with multiple outgroup members effectively improve outgroup attitudes.

Post-School Educational Aspirations: Can a Short-Term Career Orientation Intervention Reduce Inequalities by Family Background?

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Inequalities in educational attainments are significantly structured by a person's social background. Although this topic has received wide attention in sociological research, an in-depth view on the underlying mechanisms remains necessary. Educational inequalities in Germany mark an interesting case in this regard, as the access to higher education is highly structured by the parental education

background, but Germany also has an extensive vocational education and training (VET) sector, which could offer an attractive alternative to higher education. Research on educational inequalities has primarily focused on the access to higher education among persons growing up in lower socio-economic backgrounds. In contrast, the aim of this study is to investigate young people's aspirations for a pathway in VET. Firstly, I argue that social inequalities in education can also be reduced if persons from a higher socio-economic background and with an academic family background aspire to VET pathways more often. In light of rational choice approaches and Boudon's (1974) theory of primary and secondary effects of social stratification, aspiring to a VET pathway could be a conflicting choice for students with an academic family background, for example, due to parental expectations and the motive to maintain the family's social status. Effective career orientation, however, could optimise the fit of individuals' interests, abilities, and priorities in career choices, which in turn may reduce early drop-outs of university and broaden the field of occupational aspirations – beyond a predominantly academic context. Secondly, I argue that educational inequalities may also be reduced when persons from lower socio-economic backgrounds initially opt for a VET pathway, but later continue with higher education. This could be particularly beneficial for students with initially lower achievements in school, since in the German education system, access to higher education can be granted through VET degrees even if no higher education entrance qualification was obtained in school. I will analyse the effects of a career orientation intervention with VET role models on secondary school students' aspirations for a pathway in VET, under consideration of the students' educational family background and achievement in school. The intervention involves VET role models (typically apprentices in their second or third year of apprenticeship) visiting school classes and providing insights on their vocation and their personal educational and occupational pathway. The causal treatment effect will be assessed with survey data from this large-scale quasi-experimental intervention study with approximately 1,500 students by comparing the differences in VET aspirations before and after the intervention and using a control group as counterfactual. Preliminary descriptive findings at baseline before the intervention showed that students with an academic family background on average express lower aspirations for VET than students with a non-academic family background, even if they reported lower achievements in school. Whether the intervention can reduce such inequalities by family background will be analysed and discussed through examining potential effect heterogeneities by the parental education background in interaction with the student's current achievement in school.

Attenuating the Conditional Migrant Advantage? Experimental Evidence on University Applications in Denmark

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Students with migration background tend to make more academically ambitious educational choices than majority peers with comparable socioeconomic resources and achievement – a pattern known as the conditional migrant advantage (Jackson et al. 2012; Neumeyer and Will 2024). A deficit-oriented perspective predicts that limited institutional knowledge fosters ambitious choices under uncertainty, because students lack the specific knowledge needed to calibrate choices against institutional constraints (Salikutluk 2016; Zimmermann 2024). An enabling-resources account predicts the opposite: better information enables strategically grounded ambition by clarifying requirements and feasible routes (Erikson and Jonsson 1996). We ask whether a school-based information-and-role-model intervention affects the conditional migrant advantage in university first-choice applications – and whether any such effect appears more consistent with a deficit-oriented or an enabling-resources account. We draw on NextStep 1.0 (Reimer et al. 2025), a stratified cluster-randomised field experiment conducted in spring 2020 across 96 Danish upper-secondary schools (approximately 9,100 students). The intervention featuring first-generation students combined information on higher-education returns and admission requirements with short role-model videos about university life. Using linked survey and register data on the 6,487 students who applied to higher education between 2020 and 2022, we analyse whether students chose a university programme as their first priority. Migration background is defined as having two parents born abroad. The central result is a sign reversal of the migration coefficient once achievement and socioeconomic background are controlled. In the raw model, students with migration background are less likely to choose university ($b = -0.113$, $SE = 0.021$, $p < .001$). After adjusting for grades and parental resources, the coefficient turns positive ($b = 0.051$, $SE = 0.019$, $p = .007$), confirming the conditional migrant advantage. In the interaction model, the conditional migrant advantage in control schools is +0.081 ($p = .002$), the treatment effect for Danish-origin students is +0.029 ($p = .041$), and the Treatment × Migration interaction is −0.060 ($SE = 0.035$, $p = .088$). The interaction narrowly misses conventional significance, but as our results show, the implied reduction is substantively noteworthy: the adjusted migrant advantage drops from approximately 8.1 percentage points in control schools to 2.1 percentage points in treatment schools – roughly three quarters of the baseline advantage. This pattern appears consistent with the deficit-oriented account. Post-treatment survey patterns indicate lower perceived academic and social fit among treated students with migration background, suggesting that the intervention may have heightened the salience of university challenges. We treat these patterns as descriptive only. Further exploratory analyses show that the baseline migrant advantage appears concentrated among female students ($b = 0.126$, $p < .001$), while the treatment-induced attenuation is somewhat larger among male students (Treatment × Migration: $b = -0.096$, $p = .112$) – though neither gender-specific interaction is significant. The paper contributes to experimental sociology by showing that information interventions can reshape educational inequality in theoretically predictable but unintended ways, and that whether the mechanism linking information to ambitious choices is rooted in deficit or enabling pathways matters for intervention design.

The Take Up of Free Counseling at the College Transition: Experimental and Quasi Experimental Evidence

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Participation in structured guidance counseling is increasingly regarded as a promising mechanism for reducing socioeconomic inequalities in access to higher education. However, even when counseling is offered free of charge within schools, take-up is far from universal. If participation itself is socially selective, the equalizing potential of counseling interventions may be limited. This study examines which individual and contextual factors shape students' likelihood of attending a free, one-to-one counseling session during the transition to higher education. The analysis is based on EDUCHANGE, a school-based intervention implemented in Germany, Hungary, Denmark, and Iceland. EDUCHANGE targets first-generation students, those whose parents do not hold a university degree, who are often underrepresented in higher education despite having the necessary academic qualifications. In the treatment arm of the intervention, students viewed short video messages featuring first-generation university students acting as role models and participated in a brief group guidance session. A randomly selected subset of eligible students was subsequently invited to schedule an individual 25 minute counseling session with a professional career advisor.

Since not all invited students attended, the intervention provides a unique opportunity to study the determinants of counseling take-up. The paper addresses four research questions. First, which individual characteristics, such as gender, academic achievement, self-concept, self-efficacy, and migration background, predict attendance at a counseling session once students are invited? Second, does the gender composition of the classroom influence students' likelihood of attending counseling, capturing potential peer effects in help seeking behavior? Third, does matching students and role models by gender affect counseling attendance? Finally, which pre-treatment characteristics mediate or moderate the effect of role model gender exposure? Methodologically, the study adopts a layered empirical strategy. We begin with observational analyses of invited students using linear probability and logistic models to estimate associations between baseline characteristics and counseling attendance. To flexibly explore nonlinearities and higher order interactions, we complement these analyses with machine learning methods, specifically random forest classifiers. To move closer to causal inference, we exploit quasi random variation in classroom gender composition to estimate peer effects, conditioning on school by grade fixed effects and pre treatment controls. Finally, we leverage the experimental design of EDUCHANGE, which randomly assigned students to sets of role model videos differing in gender composition, allowing us to estimate causal effects of exposure to predominantly female, male, or gender balanced role models on subsequent counseling take up. Data draw on baseline and post intervention student surveys. By integrating observational, quasi experimental, and experimental evidence across four national contexts, this study provides new insights into the social and psychological processes shaping participation in guidance counseling. The findings contribute to the literature on the utilization of educational support services and inform the design of interventions aimed at reducing inequalities in higher education access.

Prosocial behavior & Trust 1

Thursday 27 August, 16:00-17:30, Room K.008

Identifying Social Norms using Validated Survey Measures

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Accurate measurement of social norms is crucial for understanding how they shape behaviour and for leveraging them to address societal challenges. While incentivised laboratory methods are considered the gold standard, their practicality and policy relevance are constrained by the resources and logistical demands of implementation. Non-incentivised survey measures, by contrast, are simple and widely used but remain largely unvalidated, leaving it unclear what they truly capture. We address this gap by rigorously validating a popular set of non-incentivised measures against incentivised benchmarks across two diverse contexts — one WEIRD (Italy) and one non-WEIRD (India) — using student and general-population samples (N ≈ 1,400) in laboratory and lab-in-the-field settings. Additionally, validation spans seven interaction domains: the Dictator Game, Bully Dictator Game, Ultimatum Game, Trust Game, Public Goods Game, petition-signing, and charitable giving. Drawing on these results, we identify the best-performing survey approach and deploy it in a large, representative household survey in Uttar Pradesh, India (N ≈ 10,000), measuring social norms of work, nutrition, dowry, violence, and health-seeking — domains with direct implications for women's health outcomes. Together, these findings yield a portable, non-incentivised, best-practice toolkit for accurately capturing social norms at scale. This approach enables large-scale norm measurement across diverse cultural contexts and is readily applicable to representative samples, making it a practical resource for researchers and policymakers working across a wide range of key policy-relevant domains.

Why does Inequality Reduce Trust and Undermine Cooperation?

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A large body of research in social psychology and related disciplines suggests that economic inequality undermines trust and cooperation. However, the mechanisms underlying this relationship remain poorly understood. Two broad classes of explanation have been proposed. One emphasizes compositional effects, whereby inequality alters the distribution of individuals' material circumstances, leading those who are disadvantaged to adopt more self-protective or acquisitive strategies, and those who interact with them to adjust their behavior accordingly. A second class of explanation highlights the role of perceptions of inequality, proposing that inequality erodes trust because individuals are aware of disparities in others' resources and update their expectations about others' motives and behavior. These perspectives make distinct predictions: compositional accounts imply that inequality can influence behavior even when it is not observable, whereas perception-based accounts require that inequality be visible to have an effect. We experimentally test these accounts in the context of desperation thresholds, defined as resource levels below which it is costly and potentially damaging to fall. Prior work has used desperation thresholds to explain why inequality and deprivation can produce high levels of crime and low trust (e.g., de Courson et al., 2025). This framework predicts that individuals below a desperation threshold will be more likely to engage in risky, acquisitive behaviors if doing so offers a chance of rapidly escaping above the

threshold. We construct a multiplayer experimental paradigm to test why inequality reduces trust and undermines cooperation. In the paradigm participants interact in small groups over repeated rounds. In each round, participants are randomly paired with another group member and choose whether to cooperate, steal, or work alone. The study uses a 2 × 2 experimental design that varies both the presence of a desperation threshold and the initial level of inequality among players. Crucially, participants are not informed about how their resource levels compare to others in their group, rendering inequality effectively invisible. Consistent with the desperation threshold framework, we find that participants are significantly more likely to steal when their resource level falls below the threshold. At the group level, higher levels of desperation increase the prevalence of acquisitive behavior, which is associated with reduced trust and lower levels of cooperation. Groups with more individuals below the threshold exhibit higher rates of stealing, more pessimistic expectations about partners' behavior, and lower levels of cooperation overall. Importantly, the unequal-threshold condition produces the highest levels of stealing, the worst partner expectations, and the lowest levels of cooperation. These results support a compositional account of the relationship between inequality, trust, and cooperation, underscoring the role underlying structural conditions may play in shaping social behavior even in the absence of explicit awareness of inequality. The study further introduces an experimental multiplayer paradigm for investigating the structural effects of inequality on trust and cooperation.

Generating Generosity: Research Design for a Co-Created Field Experiment on Charitable Giving

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Charitable generosity — defined as the proportion of wealth and income donated to charitable causes — has declined substantively in the Netherlands since 2003, while aggregate wealth has risen sharply. The negative association between wealth and generosity is well-documented: donors holding more than €10 million in wealth give only 0.06% of it annually to charitable causes, compared to 1% among those with an average wealth of €2,000. Despite the scale and societal significance of this pattern, almost no experimental research has tested whether fundraising interventions can shift the wealth-generosity gradient. Wealthy donors are a particularly hard-to-reach population, rarely studied in field experiments and difficult to influence without pre-existing personal relationships. This paper presents the research design of the Generating Generosity project, which amongst other things addresses the question: How can generosity, particularly among the wealthy, be influenced by opportunities to give? The design makes two methodological contributions. First, it uses co-creation with practitioners — wealth advisors and fundraising organizations, including major gift fundraisers, giving circle members, and bequest recipient organizations — to identify promising interventions through a Delphi consensus method before testing them experimentally. Second, it adopts a potential outcomes framework to define and estimate the causal effect of these interventions on generosity. The co-creation process proceeds in three steps. A stakeholder group comprising both wealth advisors and fundraising organizations is formed and surveyed to nominate promising interventions; nominations are rank-ordered after a feasibility check by the research team. A series of Delphi workshops then builds consensus on the most effective and feasible interventions. Shortlisted interventions are first piloted in laboratory and online experiments using windfall gains before being deployed in real fundraising campaigns. Donors are randomly assigned to treatment and control conditions. The primary estimand is the intention-to-treat (ITT) effect — the average difference $E[Y(1) - Y(0)]$ between donors assigned to treatment and control — which reflects what a fundraising organization achieves when rolling out an intervention at scale, regardless of whether donors engage with the solicitation. A pre-registered secondary outcome is the effect of each intervention on total charitable giving across all causes, not merely giving to the focal organization. This outcome addresses a fundamental ethical concern in fundraising research: that effective appeals may not generate new generosity but instead pull forward gifts that would have been made anyway, or redirect donations from one cause to another. An intervention that increases giving to the focal organization while leaving total giving unchanged provides no net benefit to the charitable sector, and may harm other causes that lose out. By contrast, an intervention that raises total giving demonstrates that new generosity has been created. We measure this secondary outcome by tracking giving to all charitable causes over a fixed follow-up window, which also reveals whether any effects on focal-cause giving decay, persist, or crowd out other philanthropic behavior over time. Null effects on total giving alongside positive effects on focal giving would constitute evidence of substitution; positive effects on both would constitute evidence of additionality.

Perceived cognitive differences can promote social learning

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Ample research shows that social learning is subject to a similarity bias: People are more likely to copy the behavior of those who resemble themselves. Here we hypothesize that in situations where different approaches must be combined to improve a solution, individuals may instead be more open to learning from dissimilar others because they expect valuable solutions from them. We test this expectation in a preregistered experiment where 859 individuals first developed suboptimal approaches to a problem-solving task and were subsequently exposed to the behavior of a demonstrator. The demonstrator pursued an alternative suboptimal approach; and participants could learn to optimize their own approach by combining it with what they observed. A 2x2 experimental design varied whether the demonstrator had shared or dissimilar characteristics, and whether (dis-)similarity related to ideological leaning or the outcome of a fictional cognitive style test. Results show that participants optimized more often after exposure to someone with a different versus similar cognitive style. Ideological (dis-)similarity, on the other hand, did not affect optimization. Our study shows that characteristics pointing to differences in perspectives can promote social learning, challenging the common assumption that people learn best from those similar to themselves.

Immigration

Friday 28 August, 9:00-10:30, Room K.011

Understanding Barriers to Naturalization among Immigrants in Germany: A Randomized Field Experiment

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The acquisition of host-country citizenship remains a cornerstone of immigrant integration and democratic inclusion. Yet, despite widespread eligibility, many immigrants in Germany refrain from naturalizing. Why? Existing scholarship highlights administrative and financial barriers, but we know little about the causal weight of these factors in European contexts. This project implements the first large-scale randomized field experiment on naturalization behavior in Germany, in collaboration with the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). Drawing on administrative data from the Central Register of Foreigners (AZR), we identify naturalization-eligible immigrants and randomly assign them to receive interventions addressing four hypothesized barriers: misinformation about eligibility, perceived bureaucratic complexity, affective concerns around identity and belonging, and financial costs. Follow-up surveys will measure intentions to naturalize and broader indicators of civic integration. We expect that even small informational and affective nudges can meaningfully increase expressed interest in naturalization, especially among groups that have historically faced exclusion. Beyond Germany, the study offers comparative insights into how institutional design and symbolic recognition shape pathways to citizenship and the resilience of democratic communities.

The Effect of Tailored Invitation Letters on CAWI Participation among Turkish Citizens in Germany

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The decline in response rates and the persistent difficulties in recruiting migrant populations, who tend to exhibit lower response propensities, present significant challenges for survey research. This is particularly consequential as unequal participation can compromise both the validity of survey estimates and the representation of diverse populations in empirical research. Effective contact and recruitment strategies are especially necessary in web-based data collection (CAWI), as the response rate for this mode remains comparatively low. Although tailored communication is widely assumed to improve participation, there is still limited experimental evidence regarding its effectiveness in realistic fieldwork conditions and the mechanisms through which it may affect participation. In this study, we estimate the causal impact of tailored invitation letters on participation in a CAWI survey targeting Turkish citizens in Germany — a population often classified as hard-to-survey. The analysis is based on a randomised controlled experiment embedded in survey fieldwork, in which individuals were randomly assigned to receive either standardised or tailored invitation letters. The development of the tailored invitation letter was based on an extensive qualitative pre-study, which involved focus groups, expert interviews and cognitive interviews with members of the target population. These data were used to identify relevant barriers

to participation, perceptions of the survey request and preferences regarding the language, tone and content of the contact materials. On the basis of these findings, we designed a tailored version of the invitation letter to increase perceived relevance, trust, and willingness to participate and contrasted it with a standard invitation letter. A total of 4,600 individuals were contacted as part of the experiment, using a sample drawn from the Central Register of Foreigners in Germany. Fieldwork involving an additional sample of 10,000 individuals is still in progress. The empirical analysis focuses on web survey participation as the primary outcome. Leveraging the experimental design, we estimate the effect of tailored versus standardised contact strategies on response propensity. Additionally, we explore heterogeneous treatment effects across subgroups to assess whether tailoring is particularly effective for specific segments of the target population. By combining qualitative insights with a randomized field experiment among a hard-to-survey population in a web survey context, this study contributes to the literature on survey recruitment and adaptive survey design by testing the effectiveness of culturally tailored communication and sheds light on the behavioral mechanisms underlying participation decisions. The findings offer practical guidance for improving participation among diverse populations and are directly relevant for the design of contact strategies in comparative survey research. While the empirical application focuses on Turkish citizens in Germany, the findings offer initial insights into whether and how tailored communication may be effective for other hard-to-survey populations facing similar barriers to participation.

Trading Off Host Country Characteristics: A Choice-Based Conjoint Experiment on Resettlement Preferences Among Refugees in Countries of First Refuge

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Refugees residing in countries of first refuge frequently face precarious conditions, including limited legal rights, restricted access to employment, and inadequate social services. Resettlement programs offer a pathway to long-term settlement for particularly vulnerable individuals, yet remarkably little is known about how these refugees evaluate and prioritize different characteristics of potential destination countries. Traditional survey approaches — such as single-item rating scales or open-ended questions — struggle to capture the multidimensional and often implicit trade-offs that underlie such consequential decisions. This study addresses this gap by employing a choice-based conjoint experiment, a method well-suited to revealing preference structures in complex decision-making contexts. Specifically, we ask: How do refugees eligible for resettlement weight different host country characteristics when evaluating potential destinations, and to what extent do these preferences vary across refugee groups? We draw on data from an original online survey (n = 420) conducted jointly by the Research Centre of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF-FZ) and the University of Bielefeld, targeting refugees eligible for resettlement procedures. In the conjoint module, respondents complete up to four paired comparisons of hypothetical destination countries that vary experimentally across eight attributes: family presence, diaspora size, crime rates, language proficiency, public attitudes toward refugees, political system, labor market access, and lifestyle familiarity. Following each forced-choice task, respondents additionally rate their perceived opportunities for building a future in both presented countries on a continuous scale. This dual-response design allows us to analyze both relative preferences through discrete choices and absolute assessments of settlement potential. Preliminary findings demonstrate that the conjoint design effectively elicits meaningful preference structures among a hard-to-reach population. Public attitudes toward refugees and the political system of a destination country emerge as the most influential attributes shaping resettlement preferences, substantially outweighing factors such as labor market access or diaspora size. Importantly, the relative importance of these attributes varies considerably across refugee groups defined by country of origin and migration experience, revealing significant heterogeneity in decision-making priorities that conventional approaches would likely obscure. This study makes both a methodological and a substantive contribution. Methodologically, it demonstrates the feasibility and value of deploying choice-based conjoint experiments with vulnerable, hard-to-reach populations in countries of first refuge — offering practical lessons on survey design, respondent engagement, and data quality in challenging field settings. Substantively, by capturing the implicit trade-offs refugees make when evaluating destination countries, the study provides novel evidence on the preference structures that shape resettlement decisions, informing both migration theory and resettlement policy design.

Signing for Solidarity: Field (and Survey) Experiments on Immigration and Welfare Support

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Strong welfare states backed by broad public consensus are a hallmark of European societies. Since the turn of the century however, scholars and policymakers have expressed growing concerns that continued immigration may be incompatible with Europe's welfare states and the widespread public support for generous social policies they are based on. Specifically, prominent arguments suggest that, because immigrant minorities are often perceived as swelling the ranks of “undeserving” welfare recipients, immigration and growing diversity may undermine public backing for social welfare spending and/or spur efforts to exclude minorities from welfare programs (i.e. "welfare chauvinism"). We examine these claims via a field experiment on immigration and welfare support in Copenhagen, Denmark. Our intervention involves approaching individuals in public spaces with requests to sign political petitions advocating for increases in social benefits. By manipulating the identity (Nordic vs. Muslim) of welfare beneficiaries depicted in our petition materials, we provide a direct test of the impact of (priming) immigration on an important behavioral measure of welfare support. In addition, we link our field data to administrative information from Danish registers to explore heterogeneity in treatment effects across experimental contexts. Finally, we complement our field experiment with a parallel survey experiment to examine differences across modes of data collection.

Friday 28 August, 9:00-10:30, Room K.008

Network effects and peer influence in pro-environmental behaviour diffusion: results from an online field experiment

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While climate concern is widespread globally, the translation of pro-environmental attitudes into concrete behavioural change remains one of the central puzzles of environmental sociology. This attitude-behaviour gap is well-documented: despite high levels of climate awareness, individual lifestyle changes lag behind what decarbonization pathways require. Existing explanations have focused on individual-level barriers such as cost, convenience, or psychological distance from climate consequences. Yet a growing body of research suggests that behaviour is also shaped by what they perceive others around them to be doing. This study aims to measure network effects in the diffusion of two daily pro-environmental behaviours (PEB): meat consumption and daily use of soft mobility. Indeed, in the context of accelerating temperature increases, public policies aim to promote adaptation through gradual changes in lifestyles. However, while most countries have high levels of climate concern, the translation of these pro-environmental attitudes into behaviours remain largely unexplained. I introduce SEQAMI, a mobile app designed to collect longitudinal behavioural and attitudinal data on PEB over several weeks through a daily logging system. Participants (targetted sample size is N = 800) were randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions structured along a 2×2 design, crossing network topology (clustered ring lattice vs. random rewired network) with the presence or absence of neighbours' sociodemographic information (gender, age, education level), or to a control group receiving no social information. Participants in experimental conditions were shown, on a daily basis, how many of their six neighbours had performed each PEB the previous day. This experimental design addresses two theoretically motivated hypotheses: (1) does peer influence increase the probability of PEB adoption in the short and medium term; (2) does network structure moderate diffusion outcomes. By comparing total diffusion between clustered and random networks, the study empirically tests if PEB diffusion follows a complex contagion process. I further test whether demographic homophily between participants and their neighbours moderates these effects, and whether individual-level conditional cooperation scores predict susceptibility to peer influence. Data collection is currently underway. Using multilevel logistic regressions with individual fixed effects and individual-level baselines as within-person counterfactuals, preliminary results show an increase in PEB adoption among participants exposed to descriptive norm information about their peers. This effect is higher in clustered networks than in random networks, suggesting that PEB diffusion may be better conceptualized as a phenomenon of complex contagion. Final results from the completed data collection will be presented at the conference. Pre-registration of the experiment is available here: https://osf.io/wzj9m/overview.

Wired to Fail? The Effect of Climate Change Narratives on Pro-Environment Attitudes and Behavior

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There is no shortage of explanations for why societies have struggled to mobilize effectively around climate change. Several psychologists have advanced what Schmitt et al. (2020) term the "Psychological Barriers Explanation" (PBE), which posits that inherent limitations in human psychology make us ill-suited to respond to climate threats. Several researchers have, however, warned that this one-sided perspective is both misleading and counterproductive. By attributing failure to act to immutable aspects of "human nature," it risks portraying the lack of action as both natural and unchangeable. The PBE narrative is particularly problematic given research indicating that the framing of a crisis is a key determinant of whether people invest emotionally and politically in addressing it. If people are constantly told that humans are hard-wired to ignore climate change, they may come to view disengagement as normal or unavoidable, dampening their motivation to push for change. Put differently, could the very explanation intended to diagnose the problem actually be aggravating it? Rather than simply rebutting psychological explanations, the present research asks how these explanations themselves shape public attitudes toward climate change. The core question is whether framing climate inaction as a psychologically inevitable outcome can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. To this end, we plan to field a vignette experiment with around 1,000 participants, who are randomly assigned into one of three conditions: a text forwarding the PBE narrative, a text stressing that climate mobilization is not inevitable pointing to previous examples of successful mobilization, or a control text on an unrelated topic. Following the reading task, participants complete measures of climate change fatalism, collective efficacy beliefs, support for specific climate policies, and behavioral intentions. Data collection is set to begin in the spring of 2026.

Misperceiving the Majority: Correcting Misperceptions about Social Norms to Promote Climate Action

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Worldwide, large majorities support efforts to reduce carbon emissions and address climate change. Yet individuals systematically underestimate the extent of public support, a phenomenon known as 'pluralistic ignorance', discouraging individual action by leading the supportive majority to perceive itself to be in the minority. Using a two-wave survey experiment, I test whether correcting misperceptions about climate-related norms activates this latent support, increasing (i) donations to a climate organization and (ii) support for climate policy. I extend prior work on norm perceptions and climate action by attributing norms to salient political and place-based groups and by including both descriptive and injunctive norms. The findings will inform how social norms can be leveraged within specific groups to promote climate action. The study proceeds in two waves. The first wave (data collection scheduled for June 2026, n = 2,000) descriptively measures support for a list of climate-related social norms varying in type and specificity and maps perceptions of how widely each norm is followed. The second wave (data collection scheduled for September 2026, n = 2,000) fields a factorial experiment based on first-wave results. In the experiment, respondents are randomly assigned to estimate support for a norm that shows substantial misperceptions either in the general population or in a salient in-group. These in-groups will be defined using first-wave responses and will include, at minimum, political and place-based groups. A random subset then receives corrective information about actual support before completing the outcome measures. The outcomes include a behavioral measure (allocation of a payment between oneself and a climate organization) and a measure of climate policy support. Pre-registered hypotheses predict that corrective information will shift perceptions of norm prevalence and social approval, thereby increasing willingness to donate and support climate policy. I expect the corrective information to have stronger effects when norms are attributed to salient in-groups or to groups perceived as less supportive than the general population. I further expect these effects to be stronger among individuals with stronger group identification. The study will provide novel evidence on how group attachment shapes responsiveness to climate norms by identifying when, and for whom, corrective information is most effective. In doing so, it examines how misperceptions of support can create an exaggerated sense of opposition, and whether correcting these misperceptions can be an effective strategy for promoting climate action.

Social and strategic motives for pro-environmental behavior among the top 1%

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A growing body of literature has quantified inequalities in people's carbon emission and showed that economic elites play a disproportionate role on climate action both through their personal carbon footprint (consumption choices, economic investments, public support for policies and occupation) and their capacity to shape public opinion, policies, and social norms. Despite their high impact, elites may not be good advocates of sustainable measures. Just like the rest of the population, high income individuals are also subject to competition with peers and engage in conspicuous consumption. Identifying the potential levers to motivate elites to take climate action is therefore a central question. In this study, we are interested in the impact of social norms and communication strategies on pro-environmental behaviors of the top 1% of income and wealth holders in France. First, we examine the effect of social norms by exposing participants to information about the pro-environmental attitudes of either the general French population or their elite peers using the strategy method. We measure how it shapes both their support for a costly climate policy and their willingness to communicate that support to an elected official. Second, we explore strategic communication intent by testing whether participants select different messages (pro-environmental or self-interested) depending on the recipient (policymaker, elite peers, or general public) and whether their elite status is disclosed. Finally, participants complete an adapted Carbon Capability survey to assess how members of the top 1% perceive their own climate impact and capacity. Using a between-subject design, with 6 different experimental conditions in an online survey (Expected minimal number of participants N=1290) we hypothesize that the members of the 1% are more likely to act pro-environmentally when they receive information about the pro-environmental attitudes of the general population, and about a larger share of the 1%. We also hypothesize that participants will select the self-interested statement when communicating to policy makers and members of the 1% and the pro-environmental statement when communicating to the general population. These effects are expected to be larger when the social status of the participant is disclosed. We further expect that participants will underestimate their carbon impact and overestimate their influence relative to their capacity for direct action.

Gender: policies & education

Friday 28 August, 11:00-12:30, Room K.011

Using Factorial Survey Experiments to Study Intersectional Discrimination: A Design to Evaluate Workplace Diversity Programmes

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Experimental methods have become central to the study of discrimination. For instance, methodological advances have been made to capture intersectional inequalities where multiple social categories jointly shape outcomes. This abstract proposes the design of a factorial survey experiment in progress aimed at advancing the study of intersectional discrimination in organisational contexts and assessing the effectiveness of workplace diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. The empirical focus is on recruitment discrimination at the intersection of gender and migration background, and on whether organisational commitments to the principles of DEI, operationalised through participation in the EU Diversity Charter, are associated with more equitable applicant evaluation practices. While prior research often examines single diversity dimensions when evaluating diversity initiatives, factorial survey experiments allow to model multidimensional social profiles and isolate causal effects across intersecting attributes. The proposed study employs a vignette-based factorial survey in which respondents evaluate fictional CVs for hiring decisions. Key applicant characteristics such as gender, migration background and skill level are experimentally manipulated. This allows for the identification of both main effects and interaction effects, enabling a direct test of intersectional disadvantage. In addition, organisational commitment to DEI is incorporated by comparing responses from representatives in Diversity Charter signatory firms with those from matched non-signatory organisations, creating a quasi-experimental comparative dimension. The study thus aims to advance the use of experimental designs in social sciences to study intersectional disadvantages in in European labour markets, overcoming limitations of observational data and audit studies that often struggle to disentangle overlapping social categories. Furthermore, the study explores how experimental designs can be leveraged to evaluate organisational policies and DEI initiatives, contributing to a growing literature on the causal assessment of diversity interventions, which too often rely on organisations' self-reported outcomes. By bridging experimental methodology with empirical questions on labour market inequality, the study illustrates how factorial survey experiments can provide insights into both the mechanisms of discrimination and the conditions under which diversity programs may (fail to) mitigate intersectional disadvantage.

Americana∗: When Does Foreign Education Pay Off? Gender, Occupation, and Employer Effects in Nigeria

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Citizens from low-income countries increasingly pursue overseas education with expectations of improved labour market outcomes upon return. Using a vignette experiment with 488 Nigerian employers evaluating 2,521 fictitious candidates across five occupations, this study manipulates educational location (UK/USA versus Nigeria) and accent (foreign versus local) to examine heterogeneity in returns to foreign credentials. Foreign education commands substantial premiums

in transnational occupations (software 18.1%, finance 15.0%, p<0.001) but minimal advantages in non-transnational occupations (communications 2.4%, research 5.6%), where any relationship operates primarily through accent rather than credentials themselves. Additionally, significant gender asymmetries emerge: foreign-educated female applicants receive substantial premiums (10–14%, p<0.001) regardless of evaluator gender, while foreign-educated male applicants receive no significant premium when evaluated by male employers. These findings demonstrate that brain circulation benefits are occupation-specific and gendered with implications for understanding return migration patterns and heterogeneous returns to international education in developing country contexts

From activities to purposes: experimental evidence on gendered preferences for higher-education programmes

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Women remain underrepresented in many STEM programmes, which contributes to gendered socio-economic inequality later in life. Existing research suggests that gender differences in people-versus-things interests shape part of these educational choices. However, current explanations fall short of explaining why some highly technical domains, such as biology and medicine, attract many more women. In our project, we propose that this apparent paradox stems from a confusion between two types of preferences related to people and things: preferences for people-versus-things activities (i.e. what students expect to do) and preferences for people-versus-things purpose (i.e. what students expect their work to accomplish), a dimension that has been neglected so far. To evaluate the contribution of these dimensions, we conducted multiple preregistered, high-powered studies combining vignette experiments with large-scale application data. In an initial survey experiment with French high-school students, we showed that self-categorised people–things orientation predicts intended occupations and evaluations of STEM and non-STEM higher-education programmes. We then experimentally tested the relative contribution of people-versus-things activities to gendered preferences for engineering programmes in online studies with English-speaking Prolific participants from the UK, the US, and Canada. Our results suggested that purpose is more strongly associated with programme preferences than activity alone. This implies that women and people-oriented participants are more strongly attracted to programmes with social applications, even when the curriculum remains highly technical. We then turned to an observational validation of our experimental results through analyses of French undergraduate and graduate application data from Parcoursup and MonMaster. On these centralised platforms, applicants chose among a finite set of programmes that we annotated for people-versus-things activities and purpose. In these analyses, we replicated the finding that programme purpose contributes to gender divides in applications beyond content, across fields and within STEM. Overall, this project identifies new axes along which gendered preferences in educational choices are structured and highlights ways to foster gender equality across fields while preserving their content.

The Politics of Language. The Consequences of Banning Gender-Inclusive Language

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Despite widespread support for gender equality, public opinion on measures addressing existing inequalities has increasingly become polarized. This project investigates how exposure to anti-LGBTIQ+ policy affects citizens' acceptance of such policies and attitudes towards gender equality. We argue that anti-LGBTIQ+ legislation may not just be a targeted form of exclusion but a starting point for a broader rollback of gender equality. We use gender-inclusive language (GIL) as a case study, given the recent implementation of bans on GIL targeting non-binary people in multiple countries. One such country is Germany, where the debate around GIL exemplifies this divide. Here, GIL refers to using novel noun constructions such as Student*innen to include women and non-binary identities, much like the shift from policemen to police officers in English. The rise in GIL use has been accompanied by a controversial debate in Germany. Proponents argue that language shapes existing social inequalities, whilst opponents regard GIL as a threat to the freedom of expression. In the wake of the contestation of GIL, numerous German states have implemented so-called "GIL bans", i.e., policies to regulate the use of GIL in public administrations and schools. Such bans may have two potential outcomes. Prohibiting GIL may reinforce traditional norms, reducing the use of GIL and fostering more conservative gender attitudes. In contrast, regulating language use might seem like a free speech intrusion, thus boosting support for GIL use, which in turn has a positive effect on attitudes towards gender equality. We test this using observational and experimental data. First, we measure the use of GIL in an original dataset of 72,000 citizen requests made to public administration. We leverage differences in policy between German states to measure the causal effect that regulating GIL use has on actual use. Second, we conduct a survey experiment in Germany (N=3,900) to measure a ban's impact on attitudes towards gender equality and GIL. In this survey experiment, participants are exposed to one of two fictitious work environments: 1) one where GIL has recently been banned and 2) one where it is not. They then engage in tasks (receiving and responding to emails) that elicit their potential GIL use. After completing the task, their LGBTIQ+ and gender equality attitudes are measured. With this project, we shed light on the potential backlash of anti-LGBTIQ+ policy, how such policy targeting the public sphere may carry over into the private sphere, and how it may pave the way for wider backlash against gender equality. This research is not only relevant to Germany but also gives insights for other contexts where Equality, Diversity and Inclusion measures are being cut back, such as the US.

Prosocial behavior & Trust 2

Friday 28 August, 11:00-12:30, Room K.008

On-line Experiments: Estimating the Effects of the National Italian Blood Donation Campaign on Social Media Users

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Digital environments are being an occasion to experiment more in the social sciences. If before experiments could take the form of an artificial experiment carried out in a laboratory setting or a natural experiment implemented in a real-life context, now experiments can also be run in analogue or digital environments (Salganik, 2018). The digital does not change the nature of the experiment, of course, but it can make logistics much simpler, pitfalls must be evaluated. Fully digital experiments use digital infrastructure to recruit participants, administer treatments, randomise, and track results. Fully analogue experiments that do not use digital infrastructure for any of the four steps. Between the two extremes are the partially digital experiments, which combine analogue and digital systems. In our work, we will run a partially digital experiment to evaluate the effects of the blood donation campaign on the Italian Ministry of Health's social media accounts, which will start on the 14th of June 2026. Blood donation is an essential component of an efficient healthcare system, ensuring the availability of a vital resource for medical treatments and surgical procedures. However, despite its importance, the number of donors varies significantly. By randomly assigning social media users to two groups, we will estimate the effects of specific video content on the decision to donate for the first time or to make repeat donations. The results will be tracked via a short survey at transfusion centres in three Italian regions, one for each geographical area. The experiment makes it possible to assess the effectiveness of communication campaigns by isolating the effects of the communication, thereby providing reliable data to improve future awareness-raising initiatives.

The Paradox of Trust, and Accountability: Experimental Evidence of Vote-Selling Willingness from Finland and Hungary

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This study analyses the demand side of clientelism in Finland and Hungary, focusing on hypothetical vote-selling. The choice was motivated by information-oriented case selection; employing a polar-extreme case design to explore the adaptive nature of clientelism within the EU. While existing literature predominantly emphasises the supply side of clientelism, this research addresses a critical gap by examining how voters demand clientelistic exchanges. Employing an experimental research method administered via the Prolific platform, the study minimises social desirability bias while measuring the incidence of willingness to sell votes. Based on theoretical expectations drawn from clientelism literature, it explores how political trust and democratic accountability impact voter-selling willingness. Ultimately, the study advances a bottom-up approach to understanding clientelism, using the prospect theory framework; it offers a novel empirical contribution to the literature by providing quantitative insights into voter incentives and behaviours within a consolidated democracy and hybrid regime with an entrenched clientelistic system.

The Effects of Exposure to the Refugee Crisis on Trust in ingroup and outgroup members

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Since 2015, over eight million individuals have sought humanitarian protection in Europe and Italy remains at the forefront of this phenomenon both as an entry and exit border. Existing research on the refugee crisis in Europe has focused on the effects of this phenomenon on exclusionary behaviors and attitudes towards outgroups among people living in destination countries. However, less is known about the impact of the refugee crisis on host communities and on the distinction between direct and indirect exposure. We address this gap by theorizing the refugee crisis as a form of acute, uneven exposure to transitory migration pressures, both in terms of socially salient events and of changes in the patterns of contact and threat at the level of local communities. We posit that the refugee crisis may simultaneously elicit solidaristic and exclusionary responses among ingroups; and reshape social cohesion between and within groups. To investigate these dynamics, we conducted a large online experiment that includes: (a) trust and trustworthiness measured using an incentivized trust game; (b) ego-centered networks; (c) self-assessed trust, political and civic participation; (d) attitudes towards immigrants. A representative national sample of Italy (N=2,000) is supplemented with oversamples in exposed small-sized municipalities (N=2,000) and a control group (N=1,000). The survey leverages variation in exposure to the refugee crisis across: (i) arrival communities situated at entry points, (ii) settlement communities hosting asylum seekers; (iii) escape communities at exit borders. The 'control group' is composed of comparable municipalities of similar population size (below 20,000 residents), but not directly affected by transit or resettlement. In the experiment we manipulated the following social identity characteristics of the partner with whom each respondent plays the trust games: sex, nationality (Italian vs foreigner), age (20, 35, 65), and area of residence (north, central or south Italy). Each respondent is asked to enter four decisions in the role of trustor and four in the role of trustee. In both subsets of four decisions, the social identity characteristics of three partners are randomly varied, and one is entirely anonymous, i.e., no social identity information. At the end of the experiment, one of the eight decisions was randomly selected for payment. The data analysis is currently in progress. Preliminary analyses show that the level of trust – both attitudinal and behavioral – is systematically lower in arrival communities. However, the uneven geographical distribution of arrival communities across the country makes it difficult to univocally attribute differences in trust to exposure to refugees.

The psychological gap in preferences for charitable interventions: a cross-national study

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Charitable giving is often guided by donors' values, whereas the usefulness of aid is shaped by recipients' material constraints and everyday needs. To what extent do charitable priorities reflect

the preferences of those who give rather than those who receive? Drawing on research on the psychology of social class, this paper examines whether socio-economic status is associated with systematic differences in preferences for charitable interventions. More specifically, it tests whether social class shapes donor and beneficiary evaluations of aid through differences in openness to unconventional approaches, orientation towards long-term outcomes, and concern for socially distant others. The paper presents a preregistered cross-national survey experiment based on charitable vignettes. Participants evaluate interventions that vary along three experimentally manipulated dimensions: conventional versus unconventional approaches, short-term versus long-term orientation, and nearby versus distant beneficiaries. The vignettes cover four cause domains: poverty reduction, health, resilience to environmental hazards, and education. After reading each vignette, participants report (1) the perceived importance of the charity, (2) their willingness to donate, and (3) the expected benefit if they themselves were eligible for the intervention. In addition to the vignette experiment, the study includes behavioural measures of past donations and prior benefit from real-world interventions to assess external validity. The findings indicate systematic socio-economic and psychological differences in charitable preferences, both in the experimental setting and in reported real-world behaviour. These differences suggest a potential gap between donor priorities and beneficiary needs, with broader implications for how charitable resources are allocated.

Friday 28 August, 14:00-15:30, Salon B.108

Keynote address

Causal Inference with Artificial Agents: What are we talking about?

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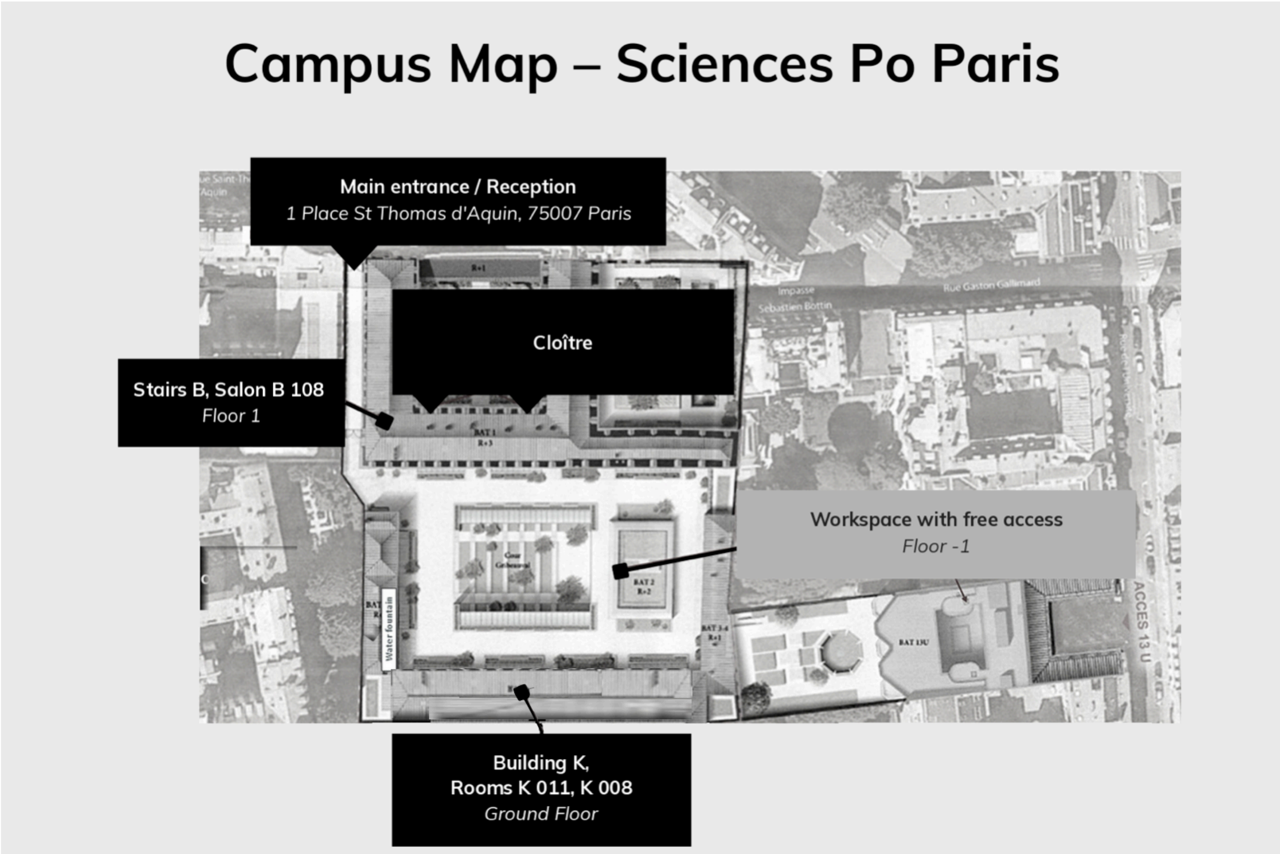
The talk intends to provide a set of theoretical guidelines to help scholars curious about agent-based computational models (ABMs) to see the larger picture within which it makes sense to use the tool as a research method for the analysis of empirical social mechanisms. In particular, the talk addresses the following questions: 1. Why should we use ABMs compared to other quantitative methods (i.e. multivariate statistics or experiments)? 2. What is the main critique ABMs receive from “other” methods? 3. Are all ABMs equally “fragile”? 4. Under which conditions ABMs can act as inferential devices? By answering these questions, the talk ambitions to advance a pluralist view of causal inference where ABMs cooperate with “other” methods in solving the fundamental problem of confounding.

Campus map


Campus Map – Sciences Po Paris
Main entrance / Reception
1 Place St Thomas d'Aquin, 75007 Paris
Cloître
Stairs B, Salon B 108
Floor 1
Workspace with free access
Floor -1
Water fountain
ACCES 13 U
Building K,
Rooms K 011, K 008
Ground Floor