Graduate School of Decision Sciences

Thursday 27/09/18

14:00

R 511

Conflict

Rebecca Morton

New York University NYC and Abu Dhabi

Public Protests and Policy Making

(Marco Battaglini, Rebecca Morton, Eleonora Patacchini)

In this paper, we develop a model to test the informational theory of public protests and petitions. According to this theory, public protests and petitions allow citizens to aggregate privately dispersed information and signal it to the policy maker. Our model predicts that two factors determine information aggregation: the precision of the individual signals, and the conflict with the policy maker. For any conflict of interest, if the precision of the individual signal is sufficiently low, then information cannot be aggregated no matter how large the number of informed citizens. If the precision is sufficiently high, then full information aggregation is possible as the number of citizens grows to infinity. We use laboratory and Mturk experiments to test these predictions and to highlight behavioral features of the players that may affect these results.

Mario Krauser

University of Konstanz
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Department of Politics and Public Administration

In the Eye of the Storm: Rebel Taxation of Artisanal Mines and Violent Strategies

(Mario Krauser)

The resource curse literature overwhelmingly argues that natural resources can provide rebel groups with the motive and the means to incite violent conflict. Surprisingly, the dampening effect that violence has on miners' appeals to produce natural resources is largely neglected. Learning that such economic activity will attract rebel groups and concomitantly violence, these may be disinclined to work in mines. Nevertheless, violence may also help rebel groups to maintain an environment that incentivizes artisanal miners to cooperate. The micro-level foundations of the well-established resource-conflict nexus are thus underspecified. Combining Olson's (1993) framework of stationary and roving bandits with Kalyvas' (2006) logic of violence in civil war, I argue that rebels with access to natural resource rents have incentives to both increase and decrease violence. The central conjecture of this paper is that rebel groups pursue both goals by safeguarding the immediate surrounding of taxed mines against violence, but actively exposing the more remote vicinity to it. The hypotheses are tested with an analysis of a new dataset on rebel taxation at over 3'000 mines in the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo between 2009 and 2015. In line with the hypothesis the results show that the immediate area around taxed mines is less likely to see violence, while the periphery has a higher chance to experience it.

Yiyi Chen

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Credibility Lost? Reappointing Failed Mediators in Armed Disputes

(Yiyi Chen, Frederick. R Chen, Fan Tang, Gerald Schneider)

In the study of mediation, a number of inter- and intrastate disputes experienced multiple mediation attempts from the same mediator. Existing research finds that the same mediator with multiple mediation attempts over the course of a dispute is most likely to bring about a peaceful outcome which stands in contrast to single mediation attempt or multiple mediation attempts by different mediators. However, less understood is why do disputants select the same mediator multiple times even if the mediator failed in its last mediation attempt. This research gap reflects the incompletion of the mediation theory. To deal with this gap, the paper applies the learning mechanism and the ripeness theory of mediation to explain the disputants' selection of a failed mediator from both the demand-side and the supply-side simultaneously. According to these two mechanisms, we argue that the strategy applied by the mediator in the previous mediation process, the experience of mediation of the mediator in other disputes, and the gravity of dispute in the international system are the main motives for disputants to select the failed mediator into the current mediation process. To test the hypotheses raised above, the paper utilizes the International Conflict Management (ICM) 1945-2003 dataset and the Issue Correlates of War (ICOW) 1816-2001 dataset within the empirical analysis.

Kai Merkel

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Cooperation, Networks and Nonviolent Diffusion. How nonviolent activism was organized during the Nepalese civil war

(Kai Merkel)

What makes organizations able to articulate nonviolent activism despite violent oppression? How is it possible that organizations are mobilizing masses in peaceful protests during violent civil wars? A possible answer is inter-organizational nonviolent diffusion, the active distribution of training in nonviolent tactics and reciprocal support between organizations. Organizations can give others a helping hand to spread the idea of nonviolent activism to fledgling activist groups. Qualitative interviews of representatives of nongovernmental organizations active in nonviolent action during the Nepalese civil war, showed insight into a network of organizations that were supported by national and international entities. The interviews provide evidence for the involvement of international organizations in the promotion of nonviolence during the civil war. Either to inform and train activist on the ground with personal or financial resources, directly fund or help to organize a variety of nonviolent activities and even protect and hide activists if they were persecuted by a conflict party. As a result, some of the trained activist groups in the long run followed this example and even started to train other fledgling activists to further spread the idea of nonviolent dissent until today.

Roman Krtsch

University of Konstanz
Graduate School of Decision Sciences
Department of Politics and Public Administration

The Tactical Use of Civil Resistance by Rebel Groups. Evidence from India's Maoist Insurgency

(Roman Krtsch)

Under which conditions do rebel groups resort to methods of civil resistance? The study of rebel behavior during conflicts typically places a strong emphasis on the groups' use of armed violence as their preferred means of contention. However, evidence from intrastate wars around the world suggests that armed groups indeed employ tactics of civil resistance as well. Particularly communist guerrillas have traditionally complemented their violent struggle against the state with specific contentious performances that range in-between violence and nonviolence and include the active participation of the civilian population: general strikes. Using the example of India's Maoist insurgents, this paper aims to shed light on the conditions determining rebel groups' shifts to general strikes. My argument rests on the assumption that tactical shifts represent a response to the local intensity of state repression. I expect rebels to retreat to adjacent areas and increasingly rely on general strikes in the aftermath of encounters with the government that resulted in own casualties. In situations when the state's demonstrated resolve to use repressive force in one area severely limits the rebels' local capacity to act, the enforcement of general strikes in neighboring areas can provide an efficient means to stretch the government's resources. The particular traits of general strikes as performances that easily escalate into violence and effectively undermine local state capacity can make the use of this tactic appealing to rebels after they suffer losses from violent clashes with the government. The argument is tested for districts in Eastern India using spatially and temporally disaggregated data on contentious action during the Maoist conflict, which was compiled in the course of the research project Raise Your Voices! The Occurrence of Nonviolent Campaigns in Civil Wars.

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Honesty

Sascha Behnk
University of Zurich

The ripple effects of deceptive reporting

(Sascha Behnk, Adam E. Greenberg, Alexander F. Wagner)

Deceptive information transmission is a pervasive phenomenon in organizations and markets. Although institutions and firms devote a great deal of resources to promoting honesty, little is known about how defectors can affect these environments. To shed further light on this issue, we induce different expectations about others' dishonesty. We find that when truthful behavior is expected, dishonest acts have ripple effects on unrelated, anonymous parties. These results suggest that ethical codes can have unintended consequences in the cases in which individuals choose to be dishonest. In addition, agents who care strongly about truthfulness resist the urge to pay deception forward. We present evidence that agents who pay forward deceptive communication are acting on their emotions. Interestingly, life experience is a crucial moderator of reactions to receiving a lie: ripple effects of deception are only observable among relatively young individuals.

Jan Hausfeld
University of Konstanz
Graduate School of Decision Sciences
Department of Economics

In Vino Veritas

(Jan Hausfeld and Konstantin Hesler)

We study the effect of social drinking on honesty in a lab-in-the-field experiment. Bar-goers are recruited before they enter a bar and—depending on treatment—either participate in the experiment right away (sober condition) or when they come back out from the bar (intoxicated condition). In both conditions, participants' degree of intoxication is measured with a breathalyzer before and after the bar visit. This design allows us to disentangle the effect of acute alcohol intoxication from that of general drinking habits by using the randomly imposed treatment condition as an instrumental variable for the degree of intoxication during the experiment. At the same time, the two breathalyzer measurements are used as a proxy for general drinking habits. We find that people become more honest, the more they had to drink, while at the same time people who drink more in general, are also less honest in general.

Heike Hennig-Schmidt

Bonn University

Dishonesty in healthcare practice: A behavioral experiment on upcoding in neonatology

(Heike Hennig-Schmidt, Hendrik Jürges, Daniel Wiesen)

Dishonesty in healthcare practice: A behavioral experiment on upcoding in neonatology We introduce a controlled behavioral experiment framed in a neonatal care context to analyze the effect of introducing a random audit and fines on individuals' honesty in a simple reporting task. Our behavioral data provide new evidence on dishonesty and upcoding in health care. We find that introducing audits combined with a fine significantly reduces dishonesty on aggregate. The effect is driven by a significant reduction in upcoding. At the same time, dishonest choices that cannot be detected as fraudulent by an audit (partial dishonesty) increase. We also find evidence that individual characteristics such as gender, medical background, and integrity are related to dishonest behavior.

Nils Köbis

University of Amsterdam / CREED

Intuitive (Dis)honesty - A meta-analysis

(Nils C. Köbis, Bruno Verschuere, Yoella Bereby-Meyer, David Rand, Shaul Shalvi)

Is self-serving lying intuitive? Or does honesty come naturally? Dual-process models postulate that human decision-making results from the interplay of two systems: a first process that is intuitive, fast and inflexible and a second process that is deliberate, slow and flexible (Kahneman, 2011). This dual-process perspective has been applied to the study of dishonesty and cheating – defined as the "behavior accruing benefits to the self that violates accepted standards or rules" (Shu, Gino, & Bazerman, 2011, p. 330). Many experiments have manipulated reliance on intuition versus deliberation in honesty tasks, with mixed results. We present two meta-analyses (no evidence for p-hacking, some evidence for small study effects) indicating that promoting intuition increases the proportion of cheaters (k = 66, n = 11,861) and the magnitude of dishonesty (k = 44, n = 6,713). Overall, we find support for intuitive self-serving dishonesty. Both the percentage as well as the magnitude of cheating increases when an intuitive mind-set is experimentally induced. We also shed light on cross-study heterogeneity by leveraging the social heuristic hypothesis, which posits that intuition typically favors prosocial behaviors . Thus, in situations where lying harms others, the intuitive appeal of pro-sociality may cancel out the intuitive appeal of dishonesty. Indeed, we find that intuitive dishonesty only emerges in experiments where no other identifiable participant gets hurt. The social consequences of one's lies seem like a promising key to the riddle of intuition's role in honesty.

Katharina Gangl
University of Goettingen

Coercive and legitimate authority impact tax honesty: Evidence from behavioral and ERP experiments

(Katharina Gangl, Daniela M. Pfabigan, Claus Lamm, Erich Kirchler, Eva Hofmann)

Cooperation in social systems such as tax honesty is of central importance in our modern societies. However, we know little about cognitive and neural processes driving decisions to evade or pay taxes. This study focuses on the impact of perceived tax authority and examines the mental chronometry mirrored in ERP data allowing a deeper understanding about why humans cooperate in tax systems. We experimentally manipulated coercive and legitimate authority and studied its impact on cooperation and underlying cognitive (experiment 1, 2) and neuronal (experiment 2) processes. Experiment 1 showed that in a condition of coercive authority, tax payments are lower, decisions are faster and participants report more rational reasoning and enforced compliance, however, less voluntary cooperation than in a condition of legitimate authority. Experiment 2 confirmed most results, but did not find a difference in payments or self-reported rational reasoning. Moreover, legitimate authority led to heightened cognitive control (expressed by increased MFN amplitudes) and disrupted attention processing (expressed by decreased P300 amplitudes) compared to coercive authority. To conclude, the neuronal data surprisingly revealed that legitimate authority may led to higher decision conflicts and thus to higher cognitive demands in tax decisions than coercive authority.

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Cognitive Models II

Yefim Roth
Haifa University

Checking Decisions in Multi-Offer Alternatives

(Yefim Roth)

Great many consumers' web navigation decisions can be characterized as simple search for information or information comparisons, a behavior that we refer to as "checking". In five studies, we investigate the impact of comparison options variety and checking attractiveness on the decision to check. Our findings show a non-linear relationship. While at first increasing the checking attractiveness leads to higher checking rates, a further increase in the number of available alternatives slightly reduce the checking rates, even though checking is more beneficial. Surprisingly, individual's initial checking decision has a high predictive power of their respective checking rates. We propose two simple models that captures the aggregated checking results.

Ulrich Hoffrage

University of Lausanne, MPI for Human Development, Ludwigsburg University of Education

Integrating and Testing Natural Frequencies, Naïve Bayes, and Fast-and-Frugal Trees

(Ulrich Hoffrage, Jan K. Woike, and Laura Martignon)

This work (Woike, Hoffrage, & Martignon, 2017, published in Decision) relates natural frequency representations of cue-criterion relationships to fast-and-frugal heuristics for inferences based on multiple cues. In the conceptual part of this work, three approaches to classification are compared to one another: The first uses a natural Bayesian classification scheme, based on profile memorization and natural frequencies. The second is based on Naïve Bayes, a heuristic that assumes conditional independence between cues (given the criterion). The third approach is to construct fast-and-frugal classification trees, which can be conceived as pruned versions of diagnostic natural frequency trees. Fast-and-frugal trees can be described as lexicographic classifiers but can also be related to another fundamental class of models, namely linear models. Linear classifiers with fixed thresholds and noncompensatory weights coincide with fast-and-frugal trees—not as processes but in their output. Various heuristic principles for tree construction are proposed. In the second, empirical part of this article, the classification performance of the three approaches when making inferences under uncertainty (i.e., out of sample) is evaluated in 11 medical data sets in terms of Receiver Operating Characteristics (ROC) diagrams and predictive accuracy. Results show that the two heuristic approaches, Naïve Bayes and fast-and-frugal trees, generally outperformed the model that is normative when fitting known data, namely classification based on natural frequencies (or, equivalently, profile memorization). The success of fast-and-frugal trees is grounded in their ecological rationality: their construction principles can exploit the structure of information in the data sets. Finally, implications, applications, limitations, and possible extensions of this work are discussed.

Angela Doku
University of Geneva

Weather Shocks and Self-Esteem: Disentangling Psychological and Economic Impacts

(Salvatore Di Falco, Angela Doku)

We elicited individual self esteem using the Rosenberg scale (RSE) in three rounds panel data in the Nile Basin of Ethiopia to determine whether droughts during the main growing season affect self-esteem. We find that negative rainfall shocks has a negative and significant effect on levels of self-esteem. Results are robust and consistent across different specifications. Moreover, we find that self-esteem is correlated with elicited risk preferences . These results emphasize the important role of economic adversity on psychological constructs. We also find that the RSE is strongly correlated with investment decisions at the farm level.

Tamara Gomilsek
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Department of Psychology

Predicting value-based decisions using a memory model

(Tamara Gomilsek, Janina A. Hoffmann, Wolfgang Gaissmaier)

Value-based decisions are mostly portrayed as a weighing of attributes, although daily decisions, such as evaluating food, may often require retrieval of previous experiences. Indeed, prior work suggests that factors strengthening or inhibiting memory retrieval, such as the frequency of exposure, systematically affect value-based decisions. The current work aims to predict value-based decisions with a memory model that bases value-based choices solely on the overall familiarity of the current option to previously seen choice options. A simulation study showed that people should prefer more frequently encountered options to less frequently encountered options and options with higher values to options with lower values. Importantly, the memory model proposes that people should more strongly prefer frequently presented options that have higher values. We tested these predictions in an experiment that varied the frequency of presented options and their associated value in the learning stage. In the subsequent decision phase, participants had to repeatedly decide which out of two options possessed the higher value. In line with the predictions of a familiarity-based memory model in high-value pairs, participants opted more often for the more frequently encountered option compared to the less frequently encountered option. However, value-based decisions also systematically deviated from the predictions of a familiarity-based model. Particular, in low-value pairs, participants often rejected the more frequently encountered option compared to the less frequently encountered option, indicating that participants decided against the more familiar option. We speculate an additional retrieval process named recollection was influencing decisions in low-value pairs. Recollection is slow and a much more detailed retrieval process, therefore in the next step we will restrict the response time of participants in the decision phase in order to be able to isolate the familiarity process and to prevent recollection from intervening with decisions.

Julian Marewski
University of Lausanne

Beyond Vague Piece-Meal Models of Decision Making: Cognitive Architectures

(Julian Marewski)

Imagine a colleague told you that ‘most models in the decision sciences, including evidence-accumulation, parallel constraint satisfaction, rational maximizing, and heuristics are under-specified, make vague predictions about process data, and represent piece-meal approaches.' Sounds rather provocative, if not outrageous, doesn’t it? Yet, I will make that argument, and in so doing, call for a research strategy shift in judgment and decision making: rather than building ever more vague piece-meal models, we should focus on developing detailed models of decision making within well-established cognitive architectures. A cognitive architecture is a broad computational model that applies to many behaviors and tasks, formally integrating theories of memory, perception, motor action, and other components of cognition. Ideally, that detailed integrative model evolves over time, with researchers from different labs cumulatively contributing empirical findings to further develop and test the architectural computer code, this way, grounding it in thousands of data points. Among contemporary cognitive architectures, in cognitive science, the most detailed and most widely used one is ACT-R (http://act-r.psy.cmu.edu/). In modeling the interplay of multiple aspects of cognition, ACT-R predicts different types of process data simultaneously, ranging from reaction times at the millisecond level to eye-movements or measures of brain activity. Indeed, ACT-R has been applied successfully to model memory, learning, perception, and decision making in domains as different as intelligent tutoring, question answering, game playing, flying, driving, or strategy selection. At the same time, over the past decades the architecture has continuously been updated to account for new findings. I explain why ACT-R offers much (and currently under-exploited) potential for model development and experimental research in judgment and decision making. I make my points by providing an overview of ACT-R alongside with examples of how we have used ACT-R in our lab to address major theoretical challenges and controversies in the decision sciences.