

Wednesday 26/09/18

16:00

R 511

Beliefs



Eveline Vandewaal

Maastricht University

Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral Theory of Mind in the Power-to-Take Game

(Eveline Vandewaal, Arno Riedl)

We experimentally investigate the extent to which individuals are able to make different types of theory of mind predictions in the emotionally arousing power-to-take game. In this game, a player in the role of take authority can claim a part of the endowment of another player in the role of responder. The latter can respond to this claim by destroying own endowment. We elicit subjects' predictions about responders' expectations of the claim (cognitive theory of mind), their anger after being notified of the claim (affective theory of mind), and their destruction behavior in response to the claim (behavioral theory of mind). We find that the ability to make cognitive theory of mind predictions is positively related to the ability to make behavioral theory of mind predictions, and that both of these abilities predict take authorities' earnings in the power-to-take game.



Irenaeus Wolff

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Stochastic Beliefs and Decisions Under Uncertainty

(Irenaeus Wolff, Dominik Bauer)

People often cannot assign a clear probability to an event but face uncertainty about their subjective probabilities. We model belief uncertainty by assuming that agents' beliefs are characterized by a distribution over subjective-probability distributions that agents cannot access directly. Our model produces stochastic choice because each decision-relevant belief is but one realization out of the distribution over all possible beliefs. Our model predicts that when comparing unknown situations to routine choices, people will make more ex-ante suboptimal choices in unknown situations. The model also offers an explanation for experiment participants not playing a best-response to their stated beliefs: participants are uncertain what belief to report or base their decision on, and hence, act on momentaneous 'belief realizations'. In an experiment, we exogenously manipulate participants' belief uncertainty. We find support for both predictions. Low belief uncertainty leads to fewer errors and thus, higher earnings, even when controlling for the accuracy of participants' beliefs. Second, under low belief uncertainty, observed best response rates are high and increasing in the amount of information we provide. Conversely, high belief uncertainty leads to lower consistency.



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16:00

R 512

Processes of Social Preferences



Baiba Renerte

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Intentions in strategic interactions: An (interactive) eye-tracking study

(Urs Fischbacher, Jan Hausfeld, Baiba Renerte)

We investigate how gaze patterns reveal intentions to others. In strategic interactions, an intention can mean a planned action but also the motive underlying an action. Even if the same outcome results, the intention behind the action can be different. We investigate whether people can use the gaze pattern to infer the intention even if the action itself is not diagnostic. We show that people are indeed capable of such type recognition and it has a material impact on future interaction. We also show that people are capable to use their gaze strategically. To our knowledge, we are the first ones to use eye-tracking technology for studying social preferences in strategic games interactively, that is, by displaying the (real-time) eye-tracking process of one subject to another subject.



Chiara Aina

University of Zurich

Frustration and Anger in the Ultimatum Game: An Experiment

(Chiara Aina, Pierpaolo Battigalli, Astrid Gamba)

In social dilemmas, choices may depend on belief-dependent motivations, which enhance the credibility of promises or threats at odds with personal gain maximization. We address this issue theoretically and experimentally in the context of the Ultimatum Minigame, assuming that the choice of accepting or rejecting an unfair proposal is affected by a combination of frustration, due to unfulfilled expectations, and inequity aversion. We increase the responder's payoff from the default allocation (the proposer's outside option) with the purpose of increasing the responder's frustration due to the unfair proposal, and thus his willingness to reject it. In addition, we manipulate the method of play, with the purpose of switching on (direct response method) and off (strategy method) the responder's experience of anger. We found overwhelming evidence in support of belief-dependent preferences: in the direct method, the higher the responders' initial expectations of the default allocation, the more likely they are to reject the unfair proposal. In line with our predictions, the direct method increases the conditional frequency of rejections. Instead, against our predictions, the payoff increase does not have such effect. Interestingly, the distribution of actions of male subjects is in line with the theory, but not that of females.



Rima-Maria Rahal

Goethe University Frankfurt

Eyes on Morals: Investigating the Cognitive Processes Underlying Moral Decision Making via Eye tracking

(Rima-Maria Rahal, Leonard Hoeft, Susann Fiedler)

How are moral decisions such as sacrificing the life of one to rescue the lives of many others formed? The Dual Process Theory (Greene et al., 2001) proposes that decisions driven by utilitarian vs. deontological moral principles are preferentially supported by deliberate vs. intuitive processes. A competing account proposes that choices would be least effortful when the choice options are readily discriminable depending on individual preferences (Kim et. al, 2018). Investigating the implications of both theoretical propositions, we report an eye tracking study, showing decision makers' attentional foci, their decision effort and conflictedness during the decision process. To study deontological vs. utilitarian decision making, we used incentivized third-party helping dilemmas, where participants decided whether to leave donations for cataract operations with a predetermined child (deontological option) or to reallocate the donation to operate a group of other children (utilitarian option). Moral preferences determined via choices in classical hypothetical trolley-type dilemmas predicted choices in the third-party helping dilemmas. Surprisingly, deontologists fixated more on operation costs than utilitarians, and less on information about the original allocation of the operation. Decision effort measured via reaction times, number of fixations and number of inspected information was lowest for participants with strong utilitarian moral preferences, while more deontological decision makers made their decisions more effortfully. Gaze patterns over the course of the decision process indicated that deontological decisions were accompanied by higher conflictedness than utilitarian choices, and that preference-consistent choices were made with less decision conflict. Implications for the theories of moral judgment are discussed.



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16:00

R 513

Social Media



Karsten Donnay

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Digital Networked Bureaucratic Dissent in the U.S. Federal Government

(Philipp Kling, Karsten Donnay, Ines Mergel, Andreas Jungherr)

During the first days of the Trump presidency, the National Park Service, a federal agency in the Department of the Interior, contradicted the Presidents claim that the crowd at his inauguration was larger than President Obamas crowd. In the aftermath of this incident, similar statements through official accounts were effectively suppressed by the president and his communications team. In response to what was widely interpreted as a gag order, many alternative departmental Twitter accounts were created that tweeted information the agencies were otherwise no longer allowed to publish, most notably criticism of the Presidents executive orders and false statements on Twitter and in front of the White House press corps. In this, Twitter opened the opportunity for a new form of bureaucratic dissent. The microblogging services afforded members of the bureaucracy direct access to an audience of journalists and publics engaged in protesting the new administration without having to go through a long-winded process of inner departmental hierarchies, official briefings of journalists, or even anonymous whistleblowing. In this paper we study the dynamics of this networked bureaucratic dissent in the U.S. federal government throughout the first three months of the Trump presidency using a complete sample of all messages posted by alternative departmental Twitter accounts as well as all associated mentions and retweets. Our analyses combine in-depth qualitative analysis of individual tweets with systematic quantitative analysis of the entire Twitter conversation. We show that the Twitter discourse is indeed consistent with the dynamics of a bureaucratic dissent movement that reached a wide and diverse audience. Yet, our analyses also suggest how the discourse evolved over time largely reflects Twitter-specific dynamics.



Sara Colella

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Information sharing on Twitter

(Sara Colella)

The number of people that get informed mainly by the updates that get shared by their contacts on social media is increasing. In addition, social media platforms are developing into an important secondary distribution channel even for those that use news media as the main information source. One of the social media most used in research is Twitter, mainly due to its wide use and the possibility to perform free data collection. Moreover it has emerged as a new medium in spotlight through recent happenings mainly due to its particular structure: the relationship of following and being followed requires no reciprocation. For these reasons we chose Twitter to investigate how individual topic characteristics may influence its diffusion on the social network. Topic diffusion over time can be measured by its time series describing the amount of activity on the topic, tweets and retweets, for unit of time. We focused just on one kind of events to be able to compare the shape of their different time series as an expression of existence of attention on the topic. In particular we investigated the announcements about sudden celebrity deaths because of their high human interest and their high likelihood to be shared. Here we show the preliminary results of how the attention dynamic of a certain event on Twitter (e.g. how long the audience pay attention to the topic) depends on some of its characteristics (e.g. proximity, controversy and peculiarity). This kind of analysis is quite common in journalism, but not in social networks in which, according to the literature, attention dynamics is considered mainly influenced by the structure of the network of the users, homophily and social reinforcements mechanisms. We do not neglect the importance of these factors; our work enrich the event popularity analysis of a new prospective focused on the topic itself. Finally our methodology can be applied to investigate the topic characteristics that affect the spread of any class of events and to also predict their future popularity.



Philipp Kling

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Combining surveys and content analysis to understand echo chamber dynamics on social media

(Philipp Kling)

Editors and journalists take on the role of curators and gate-keepers of information flows towards an audience. With the emergence of the Internet and social media, it became easier for consumers of news to circumvent the influence of these traditional gate-keepers and access information with less regulation. As a result many warn of an increasing tendency of people to self-select into biased information environments, also known as “echo chambers”. Empirical findings provide mixed results and the overall tendency of the Internet as a liberating or as a polarizing instrument is subject to intense scientific discussion. My work contributes to this debate by focusing on characteristics of individuals that might influence media consumption. In particular, the goal of this research project is to rebuild the individual news-feed Twitter users were most likely exposed to and then compare this information with data retrieved through an online survey. By asking questions regarding the individual’s demographics as well as the consciousness of their level of biased exposure to content, the results of this project will explore the mechanisms underlying the phenomenon called “echo chambers”.

