Lukas Bolte

Personal Details

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Education

Stanford University
Ph.D. in Economics — June 2023 (Expected)

London School of Economics and Political Science
M.Sc. in Econometrics and Mathematical Economics (*Distinction*) — 2016 – 2017
B.Sc. in Econometrics and Mathematical Economics (*First-Class Honours*) — 2013 – 2016

References

Gabriel D. Carroll (co-primary advisor)
Dept. of Economics, University of Toronto
gabriel.carroll@utoronto.ca

Muriel Niederle (co-primary advisor)
Dept. of Economics, Stanford University
niederle@stanford.edu

B. Douglas Bernheim
Dept. of Economics, Stanford University
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Matthew O. Jackson
Dept. of Economics, Stanford University
jacksonm@stanford.edu

Collin B. Raymond
Graduate School of Mgmt., Cornell University
cbr79@cornell.edu

Research and Teaching Fields

Behavioral and experimental economics
Microeconomic theory

Working Papers

"Emotional Inattention" with Collin B. Raymond

Job Market Paper

We propose a model where attention is allocated across payoff-dimensions. Attention has two features: it determines the weight a dimension takes in the decision-maker's objective, and it is instrumentally valuable. The model provides a unifying explanation for a number of behavioral phenomena. To name three: inattention to low-payoff dimensions leads to the ostrich effect; when dimensions correspond to realizations of an unknown state, the attention-dependent weights of the states look like belief distortions, including optimism; and similarly, when dimensions correspond to time periods, the weights imply preferences over the timing of consumption. We discuss implications for policy interventions designed to increase overall utility or improve decisions.

"Motivated Mislearning: The Case of Correlation Neglect" with Tony Q. Fan

We design an experiment to study the role of motivated reasoning in correlation neglect. Participants receive potentially redundant signals about an ego-relevant state—their IQ test performance. We elicit their belief that the signals came from the same source (and thus contain redundant information). Participants generally underappreciate the extent to which identical signals are more likely to come from the same source, but the bias is significantly stronger for good (ego-favorable) signals than for bad (ego-unfavorable) signals. This asymmetric effect disappears in a control treatment where the state is ego-irrelevant. These results suggest that individuals may neglect the correlation between desirable signals to sustain motivated beliefs. However, the estimated effect is not quantitatively large enough to generate significant asymmetric updating about own IQ test performance.

"The Role of Referrals in Immobility, Inequality, and Inefficiency in Labor Markets" with Nicole Immorlica and Matthew O. Jackson

We study the consequences of job markets' heavy reliance on referrals. Referrals screen candidates and lead to better matches and increased productivity, but disadvantage job-seekers who have few or no connections to employed workers, leading to increased inequality. Coupled with homophily, referrals also lead to immobility: a demographic group's low current employment rate leads that group to have relatively low future employment as well. We identify conditions under which distributing referrals more evenly across a population not only reduces inequality, but also improves future productivity and economic mobility. We use the model to examine optimal policies, showing that one-time affirmative action policies involve short-run production losses, but lead to long-term improvements in equality, mobility, and productivity due to induced changes in future referrals. We also examine how macroeconomic conditions as well as the possibility of firing workers changes the effects of referrals.

"Interactions across multiple games: cooperation, corruption, and organizational design" with Jonathan B. Bendor, Nicole Immorlica and Matthew O. Jackson

Teams face a variety of strategic circumstances, and it is socially beneficial for teams to cooperate in productive but not in corrupt ones. Understanding the behavior and social impact of teams requires understanding how cooperation in one situation depends on expectations of cooperation in others. We examine how the assignment of people to teams, and teams to tasks, affects cooperation among team members. We characterize the interdependency of cooperation across situations and show that in some settings, it may be impossible to get desirable types of cooperation without also getting undesirable cooperation. We show how cooperation in such interdependent settings is affected in nuanced ways by changes in the payoffs to cooperation and the temptations to deviate. This has novel implications for performance bonuses, occupational safety, and whistle-blowing rewards. The optimal organizational design involves minimizing corruption by some reshuffling of team members and specializing of the tasks to which different teams are assigned. We also analyze how technological advances change optimal team structure. Throughout, we discuss the implications for organizing bureaucracies, such as police forces and militaries, as well as private enterprises.

Published and Forthcoming Papers

"Robust contracting under double moral hazard" with Gabriel D. Carroll

Accepted at Theoretical Economics

We study contracting when both principal and agent have to exert noncontractible effort for production to take place. An analyst is uncertain about what actions are available and evaluates a contract by the expected payoffs it guarantees to each party in spite of the surrounding uncertainty. Both parties are risk-neutral; there is no limited liability. Linear contracts, which leave the agent with a constant share of output in exchange for a fixed fee, are optimal. This result holds both in a preliminary version of the model, where the principal only chooses to supply or not supply an input, and in several variants of a more general version, where the principal may have multiple choices of input. The model thus generates nontrivial linear sharing rules without relying on either limited liability or risk aversion.

Work in Progress

"The Role of Memory in Beliefs Formation" with Markus M. Mobius, Tanya S. Rosenblat and Pierre-Luc Vautrey

"Red or Blue Pill? A Positive Welfare Analysis" with Gonzalo R. Arrieta

Relevant Positions

Department of Economics, Stanford University 2022
Research Assistant for Muriel Niederle

Department of Economics, Stanford University 2020 – 2021
Research Assistant for Gabriel D. Carroll

Microsoft Research, New England Summers 2018, 2019, 2020
Research Intern for Markus M. Mobius

Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics 2015 – 2017

Research Assistant for Thomas Kirchmaier

Teaching Experience

Department of Economics, Stanford University

Teaching Assistant for B. Douglas Bernheim and Ilya Segal, Econ 202 (Ph.D. Micro I) Fall 2020

Department of Economics, London School of Economics

Teaching Assistant for Frank A. Cowell, EC 202 (Intermediate Micro) 2016 – 2017

Awards & Fellowships

Leonard W. Ely and Shirley R. Ely Fellowship, SIEPR 2022 – 2023
Gerhard Casper Fellowship, Stanford University 2017 – 2022
Student Scholarship, Foundation of German Business 2013 – 2017
Stelios Scholarship, London School of Economics 2013 – 2016

Research Grants

Russell Sage Foundation Small Grant in Behavioral Economics ($8,500) 2021
George P. Shultz Dissertation Fund, Stanford University ($6,810) 2020
IRiSS Center for American Democracy, Stanford University ($2,000) 2020
IRiSS Research Data Grants, Stanford University ($1,500) 2020

Refereeing

American Economic Review: Insights; *Games and Economic Behavior*; *Economic Journal*

Professional Activities

Student Mentor, SURA Mentorship Program, Stanford University 2022
Theory Student Workshop Organizer, Economics Department, Stanford University 2020 – 2021

Invited Talks

Oxford Theory Seminar 2020

Conference Presentations

BEAM (Berkeley); BRIC (Prague); M-BEES/M-BEPS (Maastricht); SABE (Lake Tahoe); BABEEW (Santa Cruz) 2022

ESEWM (virtual); SEA (Houston); NETWORKS (virtual); INET (virtual); Conference on Network Science in Economics (virtual); MD4SG (virtual) 2021

ESEWM (Rotterdam); NSF/NBER/CEME Conference on Mathematical Economics (Berkeley); Conference on Network Science in Economics (Bloomington) 2019

Carroll Round (Georgetown) 2016

Other

Citizenship: German
Languages: German (native); English (fluent); Spanish (basic)
Softwares: Python; JavaScript; Stata; Matlab; LaTeX

Last updated: November 2022