Gonzalo Arrieta

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of Economics, University of Zurich   2024 –

EDUCATION

Stanford University
Ph.D. in Economics   2024
Committee: Muriel Niederle, B. Douglas Bernheim, Alvin Roth

Universidad de Montevideo
Diploma in Economics   2017
B.S. in Economics   2015

REFERENCES

Muriel Niederle	B. Douglas Bernheim
Dept. of Economics,	Dept. of Economics,
Stanford University	Stanford University
niederle@stanford.edu	bernheim@stanford.edu
Alvin Roth	Kirby Nielsen
Dept. of Economics,	Div. of the Humanities and Social Sciences,
Stanford University	California Institute of Technology
alroth@stanford.edu	kirby@caltech.edu

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Experimental and Behavioral Economics, Decision Theory
Public Economics, Welfare Economics

WORKING PAPERS

"Procedural Decision-Making in the Face of Complexity" with Kirby Nielsen

Revising for the Quarterly Journal of Economics (Reject & Resubmit)

A large body of work documents that complexity affects individuals' choices, but the literature has remained mostly agnostic about why. We provide direct evidence that individuals use fundamentally different choice processes for complex and simple decisions. We hypothesize that individuals resort to "procedures"—cognitively simpler choice processes that we characterize as being easier to describe to another person—as the complexity of the decision environment increases. We test our hypothesis using two experiments, one with choices over lotteries and one with choices over charities. We exogenously vary the complexity of the decision environment and measure the describability of choice processes by how well another individual can replicate the decision-maker's choices given the decision-maker's description of how they chose. We find strong support for our hypothesis: Both of our experiments show that individuals' choice processes are more describable in complex choice environments, which we interpret as evidence that decision-making becomes more procedural as complexity increases. We show that procedural decision-makers choose more consistently and exhibit fewer dominance violations, though we remain agnostic about the causal effect of procedures on decision quality. Additional secondary evidence suggests that procedural decision-making is a choice simplification that reduces the cognitive costs of decision-making.

"The Inference Cost of Policies" with Maxim Bakhtin

Revising for the European Economic Review

Effective policymaking requires balancing the need for desirable outcomes with the ability to learn valuable information. However, when policies promote uniform behavior, they can hinder

the ability to infer information from people's actions. We propose that individuals may select suboptimal policies because they fail to consider the effects of inference. To test this hypothesis, we conduct an online experiment that simulates a hiring scenario with an initial trial task. Participants make two decisions: selecting a trial task and then choosing which candidate to hire. The majority of participants opt for the suboptimal task that does not reveal the candidates' quality. This leads to suboptimal hires and lower payoffs because these participants do not know which candidate is better. Our findings suggest that the primary mechanism driving this behavior is the failure to anticipate inference. Our study underscores the significance of accounting for the effects of inference when designing policies.

"What You Don't Know May Hurt You: Preferences Over Mental And External States" with Lukas Bolte

The dominant approach to welfare, revealed preference, is restricted to settings where the individual knows their preferences have been fulfilled. We use a choosing-for-others framework to experimentally study welfare when what the individual believes differs from what is actually true. 42% of participants see welfare as independent of beliefs; 22% see welfare as exclusively determined by beliefs; and 29% care about both beliefs and reality. Furthermore, the average participant values accurate beliefs. While there is large heterogeneity, our results suggest most people support the idea that welfare goes beyond beliefs, which can inform media regulation, informational policies, and government communication.

PUBLISHED PAPERS	**"Caring to Work or Working to Care: The Intra-Family Dynamics of Health Shocks"** with Gina Li ***American Journal of Health Economics 9(2), 175-204, 2023***
WORK IN PROGRESS	**"The Demand and Supply of Paternalism in Financial Planning"** with Sandro Ambuehl, Bjoern Bartling, and B. Douglas Bernheim **"The Welfare Costs of False Beliefs"** with B. Douglas Bernheim and Lukas Bolte **"The Demand for and Supply of Protection from Incentives: The Case of Vaccination"** with Sandro Ambuehl, Eva Kuepper and Axel Ockenfels
REFEREEING	*American Economic Journal: Microeconomics, American Economic Review, Experimental Economics, Journal of the European Economic Association, Journal of Political Economy, Journal of Political Economy: Microeconomics*

RELEVANT POSITIONS

Department of Economics, Stanford University

Research Assistant for Muriel Niederle	2022 – 2023
Stanford Economics Research Laboratory (SERL), Manager	2021 – 2022
Research Assistant for Muriel Niederle	2020 – 2021
Research Assistant for Douglas Bernheim	2018 – 2020

Department of Economics, Universidad de Montevideo

Research Assistant for Alejandro Cid and José María Cabrera	2014 – 2015
Research Assistant at Center for Research in Applied Economics	2013 – 2014

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Department of Economics, Stanford University

Teaching Assistant for Muriel Niederle, Econ 179 (Experimental)	Winter 2019

Department of Economics, Universidad de Montevideo

Lecturer (Intermediate Macro)	2017
Teaching Assistant for Fernando Borraz (Econometrics)	2016
Teaching Assistant for Ignacio Presno (International Trade)	2014

	Teaching Assistant for Danilo Trupkin (Intermediate Macro)	2014
	Teaching Assistant for Danilo Trupkin (International Trade)	2013

AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS		
	Leonard W. Ely and Shirley R. Ely Fellowship, SIEPR	2023 – 2024
	Stanford Center for American Democracy Graduate Student Fellow	2020 – 2021
	McCoy Family Center for Ethics in Society Graduate Student Fellow	2020 – 2021
	ANII - Agencia Nacional de Investigación e Innovación (uruguayan NSF)	2014 – 2015
	Excellence Scholarship, Universidad de Montevideo	2011 – 2015

RESEARCH GRANTS		
	Graduate Research Opportunities Fund, Stanford University ($5,000)	2022
	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

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Department of Economics, University of Zurich

Behavioral and Experimental Faculty Seminar Organizer	2024 –

Department of Economics, Stanford University

Behavioral and Experimental Faculty Seminar Organizer	2021 – 2023
Behavioral and Experimental Student Workshop Organizer	2019 – 2021

INVITED TALKS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS		
	UZH Neuroeconomics, "Rules, Norms, and Complexity" Workshop (Durham, UK), Berlin Behavioral Economics Seminar, CREST (Paris), "Text as Data in Behavioral Economics" Workshop (Potsdam, GER), ECBE (Bergen, NO), TIBER (Tilburg, NL), Matterhorn Symposium (Brig, CH).	2025
	LACEA LAMES (Uruguay), ZWEP (Zurich), University of Zurich, FAIR NHH (Bergen), SITE Psychology (Stanford); ECBE (Bonn); BRIC-X (Venice), BDRM (Chicago), Esade Workshop in B&E Econ. (Barcelona), RIDGE LACEA BRAIN (Chile), LIPNE Lab (University of Cambridge), UBC (Vancouver), NYU Abu Dhabi (virtually)	2024
	NABE TEC (Santa Clara), Universidad de Montevideo (virtually), BUE-EBEL (virtually); IIPF (Logan, UT); SITE Experimental (Stanford); M-BEES/M-BEPS (Maastricht); BABEEW (San Jose)	2023

OTHER	
	Citizenship: Italian, Uruguayan
	Languages: Spanish (native); English (fluent); Portuguese (intermediate)
	Softwares: Python; Matlab; JavaScript; Stata; LaTeX

Last updated: September 2025