

Matthew Olckers

Monash University, Caulfield East VIC 3145, Australia
✉ matthew.olckers@monash.edu ☎ +61 (0) 3 9902 6011 🌐 matthewolckers.com

CURRENT POSITION

Monash University
Postdoctoral Fellow in Network Economics

EDUCATION

Paris School of Economics & Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne
Ph.D. in Economics 2019
Supervisors: Francis Bloch, Margherita Comola
Jury: Milo Bianchi, Yann Bramoullé, Jonathan Guryan,
Agnieszka Rusinowska
Defence: 2 September 2019

University of California, Berkeley
Visiting Student Researcher, hosted by Joshua Blumenstock 2018

Paris School of Economics & Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne
M.Phil. in Empirical and Theoretical Economics 2016

Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne
M.Sc. in Economics 2015
Degree awarded with ‘Tres bien’, the highest distinction

University of Cape Town
B.Comm. (Honours) in Economics 2012
Degree awarded in the First Class, research paper with Distinction

University of Cape Town
B.Comm. in Economics and Finance 2010

FIELDS

Social Networks; Development Economics; Household Finance

PUBLICATIONS

Four levers of redistribution: The impact of tax and transfer systems on inequality reduction, with Elvire Guillaud and Michaël Zemmour. *Review of Income and Wealth*, Forthcoming. DOI:10.1111/roiw.12408

WORKING PAPERS

Friend-based ranking
with Francis Bloch (Paris School of Economics)
arXiv:1807.05093
Revision requested at *AEJ: Microeconomics*

We analyze the design of a mechanism to extract a ranking of individuals according to a unidimensional characteristic, such as ability or need. Individuals, connected on a social network, only have local information about the ranking. We show that a planner can construct an ex post incentive compatible and efficient mechanism if and only if every pair of friends has a friend in common. We characterize the windmill network as the sparsest social network for which the planner can always construct a complete ranking.

Biased updating creates a gambling trap: Evidence from sports betting in Kenya

with Joshua Blumenstock (UC Berkeley)

We develop a model to show how biased updating can lead to persistent overconfidence in one's ability, and highlight the negative welfare implications of this overconfidence. We validate key assumptions and predictions of this model using a unique dataset that captures rich details on the gambling decisions of over 50,000 Kenyans. The data show that gamblers react asymmetrically to (exogenous variation in) wins and losses. The bias in the learning process causes gamblers to increase betting expenditures over time. Exogenous increases in betting expenditures cause gamblers to take out high-interest loans, thus creating scope for persistent debt traps.

On track for retirement?

Over sixty percent of employees at a large South African financial services company select the minimum rate of 7.5 percent for their monthly retirement contributions far below the recommended rate of 15 percent. I use a field experiment to investigate whether providing employees with a retirement calculator, which shows projections of retirement income, leads to increases in contributions. The average treatment effect is positive but very small and not statistically different from zero.

Financial literacy in South Africa

with Elizabeth Nanziri (University of Stellenbosch)
SALDRU Working Paper Number 24

We analyse measures of financial literacy, included in the NIDS survey for the first time in Wave 5. South Africa follows patterns found in other countries. Less educated and low income respondents display low levels of financial literacy. Most countries have large gender gaps in financial literacy while the gender gap is absent in South Africa. Controlling for a number of socio-demographic variables, financial literacy is positively related to ownership of a pension and of mutual funds, stocks, or shares.

SEMINARS	ANZWEE, CDES RCT Conference, Monash, UNSW	2019
	Berkeley, NEUDC, Northwestern, Aix-Marseille	2018
RESEARCH EXPERIENCE	<i>Short Term Consultant, World Bank</i>	2016
	– Bruno Crépon (CREST, JPAL) and Patrick Premand (World Bank)	
	<i>Research Assistant, Sciences Po</i>	2015 - 2016
	– Michaël Zemmour (Sciences Po) and Elvire Guillaud (Paris 1)	
TEACHING EXPERIENCE	<i>Teaching Assistant</i>	2016 - 2018
	Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne	
	– Mathematics for economists, Master 1 level – Microeconomics, Master 1 level	
	<i>Head Tutor and Tutor</i>	2010 - 2012
	School of Economics, University of Cape Town	
	– International Trade and Finance, third year level	

- Macroeconomics, first and second year level
- Microeconomics, first year level
- Game Theory, second year level

AWARDS

Aldi Hagedaars Memorial Award	2018
PSE Grant for International Mobility	
Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne Travel Grant	
Île-de-France Aide à la mobilité internationale des doctorants	
Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne Doctoral Scholarship	2016
Embassy of France in South Africa - Masters Bursary	2014
University of Cape Town Merit Scholarship	2012
Sheila von der Hurst Bursary	
Louis Weiner Scholarship	

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Referee for: Journal of Dynamics and Games, Journal of Economic Theory, Data & Policy