



MWP MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH WORKSHOP

The Roots of Human Altruism Making Sense of Pro-Social Behavior

7th June 2019, Emeroteca, European University Institute, Florence, Italy

Organizers: SIEGRIST, Pascale, MW Fellow, Department of History and Civilization;
ZHURAVLEVA Tatyana, MW Fellow, Department of Economics

Classical economic theory assumes that all economic agents are rationally selfish and maximize their life-time utility. However, in recent decades a lot of studies have appeared showing that, first, economic agents are not rational and, second, that they demonstrate other-regarding preferences in both in-group and out-group conditions.

Understanding the roots of human altruism is important in designing institutions and their associated incentives. Other-regarding preferences are fundamental to achieving and maintaining cooperation in large groups of genetic strangers and, thus, creating a state where the rights of all citizens are respected.

The aim of this conference is to bring together the recent research on the topic and to search for answers to the following questions:

1. Are other-regarding preferences mainly driven by egoistic forces (reciprocity, signaling, reputation, fairness, social status) or does an intrinsic motivation towards human altruism exist?
2. Is altruism a human trait established in the genes of any individual at his/her conception or are other-regarding preferences formed during the life of an individual? In the latter case, what conditions foster the development of human altruism? What is the role of the family?
3. A well established fact in the psychological and economic literature (see Frey and Jegen for survey) that extrinsic incentives (both rewards and punishment) decrease the pro-social behavior of humans. On the other hand, there is evidence that pro-social behavior changes during the life of an individual. The question is, - how is it possible to foster individuals' pro-social behavior if extrinsic incentives do not work.
4. How did political economists, theorists and sociologists historically pose the problem of self-interest versus cooperation and how can historical perspectives inform behavioural economics and vice versa?



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Programme:

Session 1 - 09:00-12:30, Emeroteca, Badia

Chair: Tatyana Zhuravleva, Max Weber Fellow, Department of Economics, EUI

Daniel LUBAN, Junior Research Fellow in politics at University College, Oxford
Court Society and the Birth of Homo Sociologus

Jared HOLLEY, Max Weber Fellow, HEC Department (EUI)
Solidarity: Toward a Global Intellectual History

10.30-11.00 Coffee break

Jonathan FINK-JENSEN, PhD Researcher, HEC Department (EUI)
Solidarity at risk? Operationalizing solidarity in the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Manchester Unity Friendly Society in the 19th and early 20th century

Pascale SIEGRIST, Max Weber Fellow, HEC Department (EUI)
The Science of Sociability: The Anarchist Alternative to Political Economy, c. 1870-1905

12.30-14.00 Lunch break (upon invitation)

Session 2 - 14:00-17:30, Emeroteca, Badia

Chair: Pascale Siegrist, MW Fellow, Department of History and Civilization, EUI

Jan HAUSFELD, University of Konstanz
Motives in Economic Interactions: An interactive eye-tracking study

Tatyana ZHURAVLEVA, Max Weber Fellow, ECO Department (EUI)
Third party punishment in corruption games
Discussant: Aljaz Ule, University of Amsterdam

15.30-16.00 Coffee break

Aljaz ULE, University of Amsterdam
Group isolation breeds spite

Egon TRIPODI, ECO Department (EUI)
Sorting Into Incentives for Prosocial Behavior
Discussant: Jan Hausfeld, University of Konstanz

18.30 Dinner at Pizzeria San Domenico (upon invitation)



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