



The EUI Interdisciplinary Experimental Working Group (ECO/SPS)

Thursday 26 September 2019

13:30 – 15:45

Conference Room, Villa La Fonte

Alexandra Scacco (WZB Berlin Social Science Center)

“The Long-Run Effects of Intergroup Contact? Evidence from a Field Experiment in Nigeria”

Abstract: Can positive contact between members of groups in conflict produce long-term reductions in prejudice and discrimination? Despite extensive research on intergroup contact, vanishingly little research has explored whether the effects of intergroup contact persist over time.

To explore whether contact produces lasting impact, this paper draws on evidence from an education-based, randomized field experiment – the Urban Youth Vocational Training program (UYVT) – with 849 randomly sampled Christian and Muslim young men in riot-prone Kaduna, Nigeria. We surveyed study participants one month and one year after a 16-week intervention in which subjects participated in religiously homogeneous or heterogeneous computer training classes.

One month post-intervention, we find no effects on prejudice but find significant and substantive reductions in behavioral game measures of discriminatory behavior among participants in religiously mixed (vs. homogeneous) classes. One year after the intervention, we find that prejudice is still resistant to change. Reductions in discrimination persist but are smaller and less robust overall one year (vs. one month) post-treatment. Long-run reductions in discrimination across religious lines remain larger and more robust for UYVT participants playing with former classmates. We interpret this finding as evidence for person positivity bias in intergroup contact. More intense contact (between learning partners within classes) has longer-lasting effects than other less intense forms of contact.

(co-author: Shana Warren).

Alexander W. Cappelen (Norwegian School of Economics)

“Cutthroat capitalism versus cuddly socialism: Are Americans more meritocratic and efficiency-seeking than Scandinavians?”

Abstract: There are striking differences in inequality and redistribution between the United States and Scandinavia. To study whether there are corresponding differences in social preferences, we conducted a large-scale international social preference experiment where Americans and Norwegians make distributive choices in identical environments. Combining the infrastructure of an international online labor market and that of a leading international data collection agency, we show that Americans and Norwegians differ significantly in fairness views, but not in the importance assigned to efficiency. We also provide causal evidence suggesting that fairness considerations are more fundamental for inequality acceptance than efficiency considerations.

(co-authors: Ingvid Almas and Bertil Tungodden)