NIBS
Network for Integrated Behavioural Science

February 2016

*The **ESRC Network for Integrated Behavioural Science** is a partnership among the Universities of Nottingham, Warwick, and East Anglia. Visit us online at http://www.behavioural-science.ac.uk*

NIBS 2016 – 4 to 6 April

There is still time to register for NIBS 2016! Registration will be open **through 4 March**. Visit our conference website today to confirm your place.

This year's topic will be *Assessing well-being when preferences are incoherent*, and will be hosted at the University of East Anglia. We have an exciting lineup of confirmed speakers including

- Gerd Gigerenzer (Max Planck Institute for Human Development)
- Till Grüne-Yanoff (Royal Institute of Technology)
- Daniel Hausman (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
- David Laibson (Harvard University)
- Julian LeGrand (London School of Economics)
- Paola Manzini (University of St Andrews)/ Marco Mariotti (Queen Mary University)
- Robert Sugden (University of East Anglia)

We also have contributions by Francesco Guala (Università degli Studi di Milano), Richard Layard (London School of Economics), George Loewenstein (Carnegie Mellon University) and Albert Weale (University College London)

Reminder about FUR2016

NIBS is supporting FUR2016 – the conference on the Foundations of Utility and Risk - which will take place at the University of Warwick 27-30 June 2016. This biennial event is one of the most prestigious in behavioural science, bringing together decision theorists, behavioural scientists, economists, psychologists, mathematicians, management scientists, medical and health scientists, philosophers, and statisticians. In addition to the keynotes there will be contributions from NIBS colleagues - Graham Loomes, Neil Stewart and Nick Chater. More details about the event and speakers are available here.

NIBS Exchange Visits

Over the last year we have supported several exchange visits by students & early career researchers between our UK and overseas partner institutions.

As part of this programme we are delighted to be welcoming six exchange colleagues from Carnegie Mellon University and two from the Max Planck Institute, Berlin for a visit during our NIBS 2016 conference.

There are also plans to host a small interdisciplinary workshop in Potsdam from 18-20 April with the Basel group, and the Berlin ABC and ARC groups, on the nature of preferences and their relation to choice.

The Human Zoo

'The Human Zoo' is a BBC Radio 4 programme which looks at the 'foibles, quirks and behaviour' of humans. NIBS Co-Investigator, Nick Chater is the resident psychologist on the programme, but other NIBS colleagues often contribute. Most recently Bob Sugden talked about tradition in an episode from series 7, broadcast on 22 December 2015. Bob & Abigail also discussed 'what is fairness' in series 3, episode 3.

New Papers & Publications

"Eye Movements in Strategic Choice" by **Neil Stewart, Simon Gächter,** Takao Noguchi and **Timothy L. Mullett** is now available online before publication in the *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making.*

How should you choose, when what you get depends not only on your choice, but what I do as well?

There are several widely-used models of the processes people use in such situations. These models combine thinking along the lines of "I think that she thinks that I think," with errors or over-confidence on the part of the decision-maker.

This paper asks whether there is physical evidence for such a process, by studying how people move their eyes when presented with information about these types of interactive decisions on a screen.

The authors find no evidence that people move their eyes in accordance with an "I think that she thinks" process. However, eye movements do resemble those seen in other types of choices, including those that involve different types of risk, or consumption choices such as different types of foods.

This suggests that people do not systematically reason from the perspective of others, as game theory would suggest, but instead build evidence for one action over the other, as predicted by the general "drift diffusion" framework.

A new working paper, Mathematics self-confidence and the "prepayment effect" in riskless choices by Lian Xue, Stefania Sitzia, & **Theodore Turocy,** documents a strong link between choices and self-perception of mathematical skills in a simple choice task.

The study replicates a recent result by Hochman et al. (2014). They reported that when participants were given a partial payment at the start of the experiment equal to the payment associated with certain decisions, the participants were more likely to carry through those decisions, even when those decisions did not maximise the payment for the experiment.

At the end of the replication study, participants were asked for demographic information, including whether they considered themselves good at mathematics. The yes/no response to this question was the single strongest predictor of the likelihood of making the choices that maximise earnings.

The result indicates that even straightforward mathematical calculations can place a significant cognitive burden on decision-makers.

'Doggedness' or 'disengagement'? An experiment on the effect of inequality in endowment on behaviour in team competitions by **Shaun Hargreaves-Heap**, Abhijit Ramalingam, Siddharth Ramalingam and Brock V. Stoddard was published in the *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*.

Teams can suffer from the "free rider" problem: each member can try to rely on others to provide the effort or resources needed to be successful. Direct competition between teams seems to mitigate this risk.

This paper asks whether competition remains effective when teams have different access to resources. When inequality between teams is high, competition becomes ineffective. Teams with more resources 'disengage', reducing contributions to the level seen without competition. Those with less resources are 'dogged' in contributing more to try to catch up, but get discouraged from doing so if inequality is too large.

This newsletter is produced by the ESRC Network for Integrated Behavioural Science (NIBS), which is a partnership among the Universities of Nottingham, Warwick and East Anglia.
The Network Director is Prof Chris Starmer, University of Nottingham, and the Communications Director is Prof Theodore Turocy, University of East Anglia.
Please direct all enquiries regarding the Network to Suzanne Robey (suzanne.robey@nottingham.ac.uk)