

Winter semester 2018/19

Katrin Schmelz

Bachelor Seminar **“Economics and Culture”**

Summary of course content

(How) does cultural/societal background influence people's preferences and thereby decisions?

Economists have traditionally been reluctant to consider culture as a potential determinant of economic decisions. While preferences have been treated as exogenously given for a long time, recent evidence shows that society can have an endogenous impact on preferences which is likely to have important economic consequences.

This is a literature seminar. Below you will find topics and an article related to each topic. You are expected to find relevant literature exceeding the suggested departing points on your own. For your BA thesis, you will have to formulate a research question to specify your topic and investigate this question via a literature review and your own considerations. You are welcome to suggest a topic on your own.

The language of the seminar is English. You are free to write your BA thesis in English or German.

Dates

- When applying for the seminar, please state at least three topics, ranked according to your preferences. Submit your ranking by July 24th to: katrin.schmelz@uni-konstanz.de
- Information about topics assignment: August 1st
- Kick-off meeting: October 23th, 10:00-11:30 (F208)
- Block seminar (presentations): December 4 and 5, 9:00-17:00 (TWI, Hauptstr. 90, Kreuzlingen)
- Submission of exposé: January 2019

Requirements

- Present and discuss one topic in the seminar. (max. 45 min, counts 60% for grading)
- An outline of 3-5 pages which will serve as the structure for your bachelor thesis. The exposé gives an overview over the literature and – departing from that literature review – explains in detail what you want to investigate in your bachelor thesis. (counts 40% for grading)

Motivation (reading for kick-off meeting)

Henrich, J., Heine, S. J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The Weirdest People in the World? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33(2-3), 61-83.

Topics

- 1. Cooperation and antisocial punishment across cultures**
Gächter, S., Herrmann, B., & Thöni, C. (2010). Culture and Cooperation. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B-Biological Sciences*, 365(1553), 2651-2661.
- 2. Cooperation in good and bad institutions**
Tabellini, G. (2008). The Scope of Cooperation: Values and Incentives. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 123(3), 905-950.
- 3. Honesty and lying across societies**
Gächter, S., & Schulz, J. F. (2016). Intrinsic Honesty and the Prevalence of Rule Violations across Societies. *Nature*, 531(7595), 496-499.
- 4. Corruption and culture**
Barr, A., & Serra, D. (2010). Corruption and Culture: An Experimental Analysis. *Journal of Public Economics*, 94(11-12), 862-869.
- 5. Origins of gender roles**
Alesina, A., Giuliano, P., & Nunn, N. (2013). On the Origins of Gender Roles: Women and the Plough. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 128(2), 469-530.
- 6. Spousal cooperation and kinship systems**
Lowes, S. (2017). Matrilineal Kinship and Spousal Cooperation: Evidence from the Matrilineal Belt. Working Paper.
- 7. Cultural persistence and change**
Giuliano, P., & Nunn, N. (2017). Understanding Cultural Persistence and Change. Working Paper. NBER Working Paper Series, 23617.
- 8. Cousin-marriages and democracy**
Schulz, J. F. (2017). Why Europe? The Church, Kin-Networks and Institutional Development. Working Paper.
- 9. Evolution of culture and institutions**
Lowes, S., Nunn, N., Robinson, J. A., & Weigel, J. L. (2017). The Evolution of Culture and Institutions: Evidence from the Kuba Kingdom. *Econometrica*, 85(4), 1065-1091.
- 10. Origins of (dis)trust**
Nunn, N., & Wantchekon, L. (2011). The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa. *American Economic Review*, 101(7), 3221-3252.
- 11. Game theory and culture**
Bednar, J., & Page, S. (2007). Can Game(s) Theory Explain Culture? The Emergence of Cultural Behavior within Multiple Games. *Rationality and Society*, 19(1), 65-97.
- 12. Solidarity in East and West Germany**
Brosig-Koch, J., Helbach, C., Ockenfels, A., & Weimann, J. (2011). Still Different After all these Years: Solidarity Behavior in East and West Germany. *Journal of Public Economics*, 95(11-12), 1373-1376.
- 13. Bargaining and market behavior across countries**
Roth, A. E., Prasnikar, V., Okuno-Fujiwara, M., & Zamir, S. (1991). Bargaining and Market Behavior in Jerusalem, Ljubljana, Pittsburgh, and Tokyo: An Experimental Study. *American Economic Review*, 81(5), 1068-1095.
- 14. Behavioral experiments in small-scale societies**
Henrich, J., Boyd, R., Bowles, S., Camerer, C., Fehr, E., Gintis, H., McElreath, R., Alvard, M., Barr, A., Ensminger, J., Henrich, N. S., Hill, K., Gil-White, F., Gurven, M., Marlowe, F. W., Patton, J. Q., and Tracer, D. (2005). "Economic Man" in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Behavioral Experiments in 15 Small-Scale Societies. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 28(6), 795-855.