

Book of Abstracts

Social Norms Conference 2025

– Comparison, Conflict and Change –

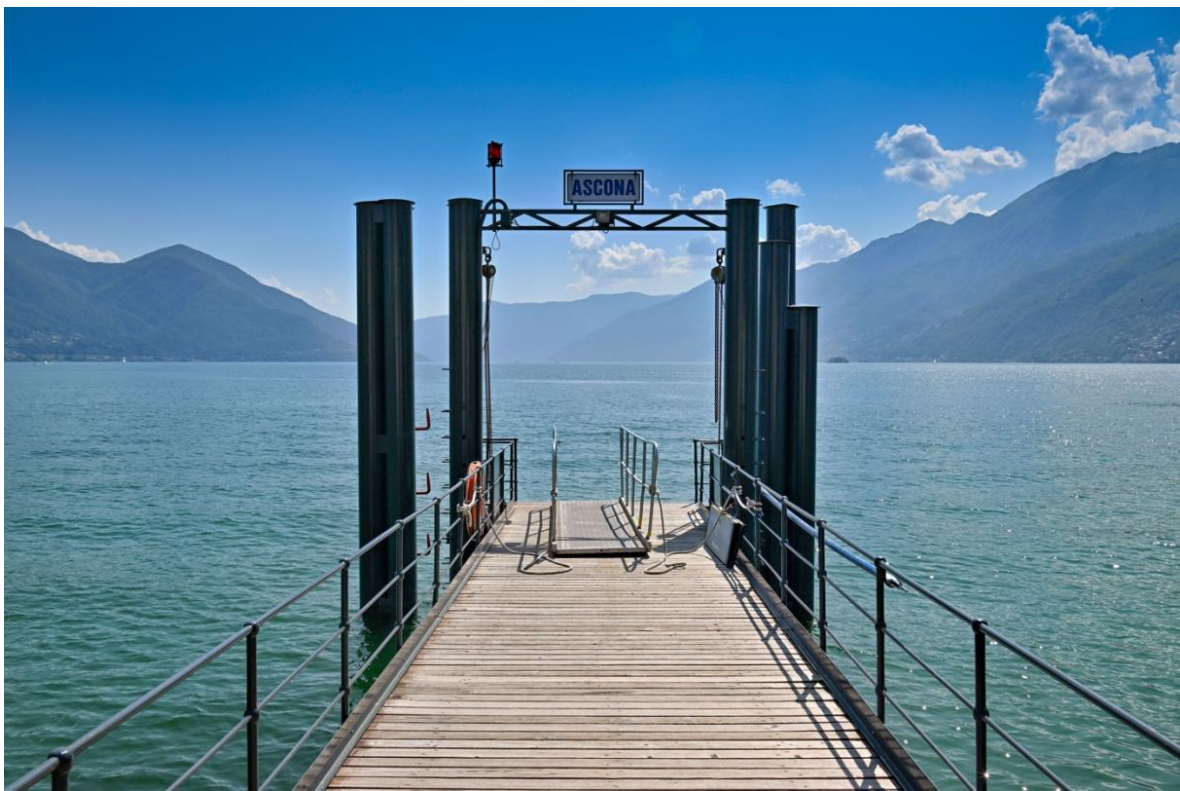
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Session A1 Social Change and Norms in Indian Society

From Justification to Rejection: Analyzing Inter-Generational Gendered Attitudes Toward Wife-Beating

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Abstract: Evolving gender norms shape intergenerational and gender differences in attitudes, including toward wife-beating. This study examines these differences in India, using data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2019-21, categorizing respondents into Generation X (1965-1979), Generation Y (1980-1999), and Generation Z (post-2000). Bivariate analysis and logistic regression were conducted on 105,975 women and 98,275 men using Stata (V 17). Attitudes toward wife-beating were assessed based on respondents' justification in situations like (a) going out without informing, (b) neglecting duties, (c) arguing, (d) refusing sex, (e) poor cooking, (f) suspected infidelity, and (g) disrespecting in-laws. Generation Z women were significantly less likely than Generation X women to justify wife-beating (AOR=0.95, CI: 0.93, 0.97), reflecting the influence of education, awareness, and gender equality movements. In contrast, Generation Z men were more likely than Generation X men to defend wife-beating (AOR=1.11, CI: 1.01, 1.23), influenced by societal pressure to conform to hypermasculine ideals, economic stress, and frustrations with shifting gender dynamics. These findings reveal significant intergenerational gender differences in India, with Gen Z women less likely to justify wife-beating, while Gen Z men are more likely to do so. These contrasting trends underscore the complexities of evolving gender norms and are critical for designing gender equality interventions.

Domino Effects of Microfinance and a Chameleon Loan Group -Does a microcredit program increase income, break social norms and achieve gender empowerment sequentially?-

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Abstract: Once a person, in many cases a woman, joins a microcredit program and starts a new business, she will gain access to financial and other resources, decide matters to which she was previously denied access, earn money by herself, and achieve empowerment in the household and society. However, whether microfinance triggers such domino effects has not been quantitatively verified. This study provides the first quantitative analysis of the domino effects of a microcredit program. Using primary data collected from farm households in India, this study estimates how and to what extent microfinance influences one goal, and then the achievement of one goal affects the probability of achieving another goal. Specifically, this study conducts a generalized structural equation modeling (GSEM) analysis and examines whether microfinance causes the domino effects: microfinance increases household income first, and then, the increased household income breaks social norms of women and achieves gender empowerment measured by the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index

(Hypothesis 1), or microfinance break social norms of women and achieves gender empowerment first, and gender empowerment leads to increase in household income (Hypothesis 2). Our study reveals the following findings. First, domino effects, the sequential achievement of increasing income and breaking social norms, do not exist if we limit our focus to the common effects of a microcredit program. However, if we extend our focus to the heterogeneity of groups formed under a group lending program of microfinance and estimate the specific effects of a loan group's characteristics, a different story emerges. GSEM analyses of a loan group's characteristics reveal that each microfinance goal requires different group characteristics for achievement. We find that some group characteristics have the opposite effects on a given goal. Trust built among members, i.e., relational social capital, has a positive impact on household income but a negative impact on empowerment in asset decision-making (Indicator 4). The leadership of a group leader also has mixed impacts. Specifically, it has a positive impact on overall empowerment level and empowerment in public speaking (Indicator 8), yet it lowers the probability of increasing household income. The results also reveal that monitoring among members (i.e., peer effects) has positive impacts on nearly all goals except empowerment in asset decision-making (Indicator 4). These results imply that if a loan group changes its goal, it must change its characteristics. Furthermore, our analyses confirm that domino effects exist between household income and empowerment related to the household. The existence of these effects suggests that a loan group can benefit from the domino effect and achieve multiple goals efficiently if it sets its goals in the right order and can transform its group characteristics like a chameleon.

Microcredit is a very small amount of money lent to a person or group, especially in order to make it possible for people in poor countries to start businesses (Cambridge Dictionary)

Most Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) offer a microcredit program through a group lending system. In many cases, a loan group formed under a group lending program consists of 5-10 self-selected members.

Challenging Norms: The Impact of Employment Duration on Stigma Consciousness and Equal Access to Opportunities for SC and ST Employees in India

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Abstract: The Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) communities in India have long endured discrimination due to entrenched societal norms. Studies have reported that high castes experience high status. Caste-based discrimination can manifest in various ways within the workplace, including social exclusion and limited opportunities for advancement. A total of 102 employees participated in the study. A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted to assess the effects of firm type and years of employment on stigma consciousness and equal access to opportunities. Stigma consciousness refers to the awareness and internalization of societal stigma. When workplace norms perpetuate exclusion and bias, SC and ST employees are more likely to internalize these negative societal attitudes, leading to higher stigma consciousness. Equal access to opportunities reflects the perceived fairness and availability of opportunities within the workplace. Results reveal that Employees with less than two years of experience tend to experience higher levels of stigma consciousness. Also, employees who have been with the same firm for more than four years report having

greater access to opportunities. Organizations need to actively challenge workplace norms for new comers. Organizations can promote equal opportunities and ensure representation of SC/ST individuals in leadership roles. By doing so, they can create an environment where everyone feels valued and respected.

Session B1 Gender and Family Norms

Structural Duality and Well-Being: Examining the Relationship Between Personal and Societal Gender Norms Across Countries

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Abstract: Individuals differ in their norms about appropriate behaviors and roles for men and women, known as gender norms. These norms include preferences about the separate spheres for men and women, traditional divisions of labor, and male privilege. Moreover, researchers have demonstrated the impact of gender norms on various dimensions of well-being. While there has been increasing interest in the cultural analysis of the relationship between gender norms and subjective well-being (SWB), previous studies have overlooked how these relationships may vary depending on the predominant gender norms and the level of gender equality at the country level. Drawing on the concept of structural duality, this study explores the interplay between (1) personal gender norms and public gender norms, and (2) personal gender norms and societal gender equality, and their implications for SWB. Using data from the joint European Values Study (EVS) and World Values Survey (WVS) (2017-2022), the findings demonstrate that a structural fit in both cultural and objective aspects of the social structure is related to SWB levels. These results offer important empirical insights and theoretical contributions, advancing our understanding of gender norms, cultural sociology, and SWB.

Mating Market Competition and Gender Norms

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Abstract: We study norms regulating socially acceptable female behavior and how a between-group competition in the mating market shapes their development. We focus on the case of the inflow of ethnic Greek refugees following the Greco-Turkish conflict in the early 20th century and examine how the composition of the refugee population influenced the gender norms in the affected localities. As the conflict in Turkey resulted in many men captured or executed before they could emigrate, women were overrepresented in the refugee population, triggering a competition shock in the mating market. The prevailing norms stigmatized women living outside male-headed households, making female refugees particularly vulnerable to stereotypes of low moral standards. We conjecture that for a

sufficient level of competition, an individual from the local population has an incentive to double down on conservative gender norms as a means of undermining the reputation of the newcomer competitors, even if this does not align with their true preferences as this amplifies the locals' comparative advantage over the morally stigmatized competition. We hypothesize that this, in turn, led to an increased value placed on conservative values signaled by female behavior. To study this idea, we exploit the variation in the gender composition of refugees in a given locality as a proxy for the intensity of competition relying on the as-good-as-random allocation of refugees in Greek villages.

Intra-individual attitude change towards gender roles and immigration in the Netherlands, 2010 – 2024

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Abstract: A prominent debate in the social sciences circles around the question how social norms change over time. While generally being persistent, sociocultural norms have witnessed two oppositional changes: an egalitarian shift and a corresponding traditional backlash. Yet, macro level theories fall short in explaining intra-individual attitude changes. Adapting individual attitudes to changing political and societal situations such as the European migration crisis of 2015/16 in order to conform to social identities can explain sudden norm changes. Studying intra-individual attitude change, the paper asks, first, whether and how do individuals change their sociocultural attitudes over time? Second, are there collective changes in attitudes at certain points in time? And third, whether and how do individuals transition between egalitarian, traditional and other forms of attitudes? Taking a longitudinal perspective on norm change, I use LISS panel data from the Netherlands and study attitudes towards gender roles and immigration across 15 waves between 2010 and 2024. Both attitude dimensions are highly intertwined, creating new forms of ambivalent, multidimensional attitude patterns. I model intra-individual attitude change with latent profile transition models. The latent variable technique estimates attitudinal groups for each wave as well as the transition between attitudinal groups from one wave to the next thus tracing individuals' attitude movements over time.

Session A2 Social Change and Norms in Indian Society

Wisdom of Folklore and Storytelling Narrative: Changing Social Norms of Women and Environment Intimate Relationship in India

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Abstract: The paper examines the impact of folklore and storytelling in changing the social norms of understanding women's role in preservation of environment. The process of unsustainable growth through industrialization and urbanization-transportation, burning of fossil fuels, deforestation have led to problems like desertification, global warming, pollution resulting in displacement and mass migration. For the development and the survival of humankind we have to make this process environmentally sustainable. Women have always shared a close relationship with environment, natural resources and are equated with mother nature in Indian folklore and storytelling. This form of transfer of indigenous knowledge from generation to generation and its amalgamation in contemporary education system is contributing to changing the mainstream narrative. Women are increasingly seen and respected as protector of forests, biodiversity whether it is the panchtantra folklore or storytelling of Chipko movement where women hug trees to save them from being cut. The paper reflects on the norm changes and its social impact on women's position in society through a comparative perspective from India and beyond using both primary and secondary resources of surveys and case studies. In the final, the paper offers policy implications for adapting storytelling methods and tapping indigenous knowledge in other parts of the world to change the social norms to appreciate women's contribution in climate action.

Social Norms and National Development: A Critical Analysis of India's Challenges

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Abstract: This research paper critically examines the impact of social norms on India's development. The study highlights significant regional variations in preferences for family size and gender, revealing a complex interplay of cultural, societal, and demographic factors. In states like Haryana and Punjab, there is a strong inclination towards smaller family sizes, with a notable preference to stop having children after two daughters. Conversely, states like Bihar and Gujarat exhibit a pronounced desire for a son, with a considerable proportion of individuals willing to have more children in hopes of having a boy. This cultural preference for male offspring is particularly evident in Bihar, where 47.8% of individuals aged 28-43 express a willingness to have more children to achieve this goal. The research also uncovers significant gender biases in educational opportunities across different states. In Andhra Pradesh, 45.0% of the 15-27 age group strongly agree and 23.3% agree that boys should receive more educational opportunities, reflecting a substantial endorsement of gender inequality in education. Similarly, in Delhi, 70.9% of the 15-27 age group disagree and 17.9% strongly disagree with the idea of equal educational opportunities for girls, indicating a prevailing bias favoring boys. Overall, the research underscores the need for targeted

interventions to address gender biases in family planning and education, which are critical for India's development.

Session B2 Gender and Family Norms

Making Sense of Honor Killings?

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Abstract: Honor killings, which occur when women are perceived to have broken purity norms and bring “dishonor” to their family, pose profound moral and public health problems and underrecognized deep sociological puzzles. Given the immense cost, why do families murder their own daughter, niece, or cousin? And, conversely, given the tragic consequences, why does norm breaking happen in the first place? Drawing on accounts of honor killings, we characterize the key actors, actions, and incentives, and develop two interlinked theoretical models that yield sharp predictions for norms and killings. Counterintuitively, our models predict that honor killings occur most frequently when honor norms are contested; not when they are strictest. Analyzing a large-scale dataset (25 countries, 26,000 individuals) on attitudes towards honor killings and building a unique dataset of honor killings from Turkey, we find broad support for the hypotheses. Our work advances the theoretical understanding of honor norms and killings and provides one of the most comprehensive empirical analyses of the factors that increase or decrease them.

The sequential rise of female religious leadership

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Abstract: In his seminal work “Ordaining Women”, Mark Chaves (1997) highlighted the phenomenon of “loose coupling” regarding female religious leadership: congregations often display inconsistencies between their stated norms and actual practices. Some congregations declare openness to female leadership but do not practice it, while others officially forbid female leadership yet have women in leadership roles. Our paper identifies a theoretical mechanism producing this inconsistency. We propose that congregations typically first loosen their formal norms governing female access to leadership and only later allow women to occupy leadership positions in practice. This two-stage process results in a temporal lag between policy change and practice, creating the observed “loose coupling” where rules are often more gender-egalitarian than practice. Using two waves of the National Congregation Survey Switzerland (NCSS 2009, 2022) covering all religious traditions, we test our theory both on an aggregate and a unit-level and find strong support for it. Simulations further indicate that certain characteristics of the organizational population of congregations, such as their low attrition rate, may explain a large part of the lag between rule change and practice change.

Uncovering gendered norms in sperm and egg cell donation

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Abstract: With the rapid growth of the possibilities and accessibility of assisted reproduction in modern societies, the question arises how social norms shape gamete donor choice. To assess the criteria that people look for in egg cell and sperm donors and to test for potential differences in expectations depending on the sex of the donor, we designed a choice experiment (CE) including age, height, body weight, eye colour, personality, attractiveness, educational level and religion of the donor. The CE was embedded in the second wave of the Swiss Assisted Reproductive Longitudinal Study (CHARLS), which will be launched in February 2025. In line with qualitative research on companies selling sex cells (Almeling, 2007, 2011), we expect to find gendered differences in what is deemed most important for egg cell vs sperm donors, with attractiveness and personality being more important for egg cell donors and status (measured through education) more important for sperm donors. We also expect to find differences in the evaluations of donor criteria depending on the gender and relationship status of the respondent (Hertz et al., 2015; Rodino et al., 2011). With our research, we thus aim to uncover gendered norms that exist in regard to what is expected of female and male sex cell donors. The findings will allow us to not only gain insight into what traits people are looking to transmit to their offspring more broadly, but also on the gendered expectations when it comes to reproduction.

Session A3 Social Change and Social Norms in Indian Society

Segregation or Polarization! A theoretical exploration to distinguish the two socio-spatial regimes and their linkages with social norms

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Abstract: In recent decades, socio-spatial inequality in cities has been conceptualized by various nomenclature, i.e., polarization, segregation, etc. The significance and contexts of these terms are often argued, as many researchers use them interchangeably, while some use them in varied circumstances. The study fills this knowledge vacuum by exploring new theoretical perspectives on spatial segregation and polarization through the lenses of social norms. This research aims to establish the fine distinction between these two socio-spatial regimes, thereby unfolding their linkages with social norms. The study applies theoretical research, including exploring their evolutionary dynamics and content analysis. We aim to test the hypothesis that spatial segregation and polarization are conceptually different but interlinked. Segregation specifies how various groups are spatially separated, whereas polarization describes how clusters increasingly opposed socially are growing closer geographically. The fewer groups, socially opposing clusters, and scale make polarization different from segregation. Polarization also relates to the temporal dimension as it may result

from continued segregation and group clustering. While polarization induces macro-level cultural/political divides and varying economic norms, segregation remains a localized phenomenon inducing enclave-specific norms and social isolation. They both have distinct impacts on social norms, demanding distinct policy implications.

Changing or Static? Social Norms and Labour Market Relations in the Context of Paid Domestic Work in India

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Abstract: Domestic work in India is undergoing significant transformations, reflecting shifts in gender, caste, and class norms. Traditionally undervalued and shaped by hierarchical social structures, paid domestic work remains tied to these norms. However, urbanization, changing household structures, and a new class of employers and workers are challenging these norms, leading to a gradual blurring of traditional boundaries. While existing studies document these shifts through qualitative interviews, there is limited evidence on how these changes affect labor market outcomes, such as the types of tasks performed, wages, etc. This paper addresses this gap using fieldwork conducted in Delhi with 150 part-time women domestic workers. By employing a mixed-methods approach and data collected through structured questionnaires, the study introduces a novel method to document the changing nature of tasks and their link to labor outcomes. Findings reveal that tasks like cleaning toilets or cooking continue to reflect notions of purity and pollution. However, barriers are breaking down, influenced by the caste and religious backgrounds of workers in particular localities. Additionally, a new generation of workers and employers is increasingly accepting of sharing spaces and working with those from different caste backgrounds, in contrast to older generations who hold onto traditional norms. This study provides empirical insights into the continuity and change in paid domestic work in India.

On Waning “Superiority” of Tribal Socio-Cultural Norms and Demographic Outcomes: A Comparative Study in Central India, 1961 – 2021

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¹Independent Scholar

Abstract: At the foundation of the proposed paper lies a nearly commonplace proposition that differential patterns and trends in social norms and cultural practices between diverse social groups contribute, in a large measure especially in historical past, to their observed differentials in demographic behaviour and outcomes (e.g. population growth, fertility, mortality, migration) and their temporal transitions. Indeed, this commonly perceived interlinkage effectually serves as the null hypothesis of the present study. More specifically, India’s tribal people (officially called Scheduled Tribes, ST for short) have traditionally had far more balanced gender-relations, higher female status and autonomy, higher female age at marital union, relatively prolonged breast-feeding after child birth, higher rates of female

celibacy, lesser degree of patriarchy, much closer habitation proximity and interface with the natural environment in comparison with their non-tribal counterparts, particularly low caste (officially called Scheduled Castes, SC for short) societies. All this makes for a reasoned hypothesis that both in historical past (when use of modern contraceptives, modern health care and medicines were rudimentary) as well as the present (particularly if modern health provisions, family planning facilities and other civic amenities are equitably available/accessible across all social groups), a distinctive tribal demographic regime characterised by lower levels of fertility, mortality (especially lower infant and child mortality) and population growth vis-à-vis those of non-tribal social groups (e.g. SC and Non-SC/ST) should be discernible. However, such a hypothesis about tribal demographic scenario, while more likely to hold true in the past, could increasingly be waned or even get reversed in the present if tribes become relatively and/or increasingly disadvantaged and deprived vis-à-vis non-tribal social groups. The paper proposes to investigate as to which one amongst such plausible (hypothesised) demographic regimes is borne out by observed patterns of long-term trends in key components of both tribal demography and their socio-cultural milieus in comparison with those found among non-tribal social counterparts in two adjacent states of central India, namely Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, the former being born in 2000 by carving out a chunk of tribe-concentrated regions/districts from a larger erstwhile latter). More precisely, the proposed study addresses following key questions: a) whether tribal demographic regime – especially in historical past marked more by environment of natural setting and influences – was ‘superior’ in the sense of lower levels of fertility, mortality and population growth vis-à-vis those of SC and Non-ST/SC groups; b) whether tribal demographic superiority in the past, if found true, is getting waned over recent past as a fallout of increasing (relative) disadvantage, deprivation and discrimination against tribes vis-à-vis non-tribes in the provision and access of modern improved amenities/facilities in the spheres of reproductive health/choice and regulation, overall health care, morbidity and mortality and basic needs such as nutritional standard. The potential importance of findings of the study is not only nearly obvious in its own right but it also lies in a deeper understanding of, and in evolving effective policy for ameliorating, the currently persistent armed movements, conflicts and insurgency in a few tribal pockets in this region.

Session B3 Family and Gender Norms

Reinforcing or Reshaping Norms. Social Robots in Society

Lena Fiedler¹

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Abstract: Social robots are (semi-)autonomous machines designed to socially interact with humans. To ensure successful interaction, these robots must meet not only technical requirements, such as detecting speech and gestures, but also social expectations. Specifically, social robots must recognize social cues and respond in accordance with social norms. For instance, they should speak at an appropriate volume and address individuals respectfully,

using either first or last names as the context demands. Although appropriate behavior is highly context-dependent, social robots' actions are generally guided by established social norms. Drawing from feminist technology studies, I argue that this relationship is bidirectional: robots are not only shaped by social norms but also actively participate in shaping, reinforcing, or altering them. This dynamic places significant responsibility on developers who encode these norms into robotic systems, thereby influencing human social interactions. This responsibility is fraught with ethical challenges. I address one in particular, the so-called Gendler's dilemma. Developers face a choice: adhere to existing norms, such as designing caregiving robots with stereotypically female traits, which aligns with societal expectations; or challenge these norms by creating counter-stereotypical designs, which align with moral imperatives to promote equity. This paper explores this dilemma and its implications for robot development and social norms.

“Is Your Baby Normal?” Prevailing Norms of Childrearing

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Abstract: How have childrearing norms changed over the past century? We explore variations in expert advice in American “parenting” magazine articles between 1926 and 2022 and compare it with 60 interviews with professional parents from Canada and the United States. Magazine advice data document childrearing norms, practices, and philosophies over time, allowing us to examine changing social contexts regarding childrearing. Meanwhile, interviews provide us a window into how contemporary parents conceptualize childrearing norms. Expert advice identifies prevailing norms and new childrearing approaches. For instance, “intensive” approaches, including fostering children’s cognitive development have become widely accepted norms over the past several decades. Notably, in the 1920s and 1930s, parents were advised to instill good habits, while children’s physical and cognitive development became the focus by mid-century. This has given way since the 1990s to a more “intensive” approach to parenting, featuring hands-on engagement, and “boosting and teaching” children. While interviews suggest that parents recognize and feel pressured by these cultural norms, they do not always see their own practices through this lens. Instead, they emphasize the importance of instilling other values and traits (e.g., happiness, being a contributing member of society). We discuss these findings and consider some of the implications to theorizing prevailing norms of childrearing.

Session C1 Mechanisms of Social Norms: Theoretical Approaches

Norms, conventions, and social change: An embedded game approach

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Abstract: This paper introduces a novel modeling framework for understanding the structural underpinnings of moral action, offering new insights into the interplay between social norms, egoistic incentives, and behavioral dynamics. Grounded in the new sociology of morality (Hitlin & Vaisey 2010, 2013; Simpson & Willer 2015) and the concept of thick morality (Abend 2011; Tavory 2011) in particular, the framework employs game theory as its analytical tool. It emphasizes that morally relevant situations cannot be isolated from the broader social system, which shapes not only the content of social norms but also the incentives to adhere to moral rules. The paper argues that this approach reveals the divergent impacts of different incentives on social dynamics, particularly highlighting distinctions between norms that can be sustained as non-normative conventions and those that cannot. A two-person bargaining game serves as a case study, demonstrating how the content and strength of social norms influence behavioral and discursive dynamics. Namely, the analysis shows, among others, when could and when could not oppressing norms in bargaining situations collapse swiftly as a result of anomic trends.

Social norm dynamics in a behavioral epidemic model

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Abstract: Understanding the social determinants that influence the adoption of preventive measures during a disease outbreak is crucial for building effective epidemic models and hence for policy making. While traditional behavioral epidemic models focused on rational decision-making, psychological biases and the incorporation of simple imitation-based mechanisms to account for social influence, recent experimental studies highlight the necessity of considering also the role of social norm dynamics. Here, we develop a behavioral epidemic model on a multilayer network, by integrating an Experience Weighted Attractor learning mechanism with the dynamics of social norms. The resulting decision-making process, can potentially lead to a boost in vaccination coverage and hence to a reduced final infected fraction. Furthermore, we examine the importance of the dynamics of each one of the social norms' types, injunctive or descriptive, in reducing the infected fraction, finding the former to have a more significant effect, in such a repetitive decision-making setting. We also explore the role that external interventions on the dynamics of social norms can have on the expansion of an epidemic, aiming to identify improved public communication protocols. Enhanced models of social norm dynamics, if validated and tested, can better capture the complexities of human social behavior and mitigate various societal challenges beyond pandemics.

Dissociative Normativity

Marek Winkel¹

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Abstract: According to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, the norms of society derive from struggles for hegemony. Political actors attempt to define society's identity and convince citizens to support their visions. This ontological model is getting criticized for being undercomplex: In many cases, citizens passively support the enforcement of norms without being convinced of them. Studies have pointed to the missing role of psychology in the work of Laclau and Mouffe, which could explain, why certain norms prevail over others in certain situations. The paper draws on the phenomenon of dissociation, to show, how the emergence of norms can ground on conscious and unconscious motivations within population. Dissociation describes the separation of a subject from its identity, when it gets into psychic trouble. Subsequently, it gets capable of doing or supporting actions that it would not do or support under different circumstances. The paper argues that citizens and society can show dissociation in two ways: An unconscious dissociation can follow societal crisis, when citizens feel overwhelmed or being put under pressure by political actors. A conscious dissociation occurs, when society or citizens demand psychic or moral relief and support decisions while distancing from them at the same time. This double-sided model of dissociation helps to understand norm-building within societal struggle. Further, it raises questions of responsibility and agency in the context of norm-building.

Session E1 Migration and Ethnic Discrimination

Asparagus! Worker Shortages and Local Immigration Support

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Abstract: Can narratives change norms? We investigate how peoples' attitudes towards immigration change when exposed to dramatic declines in the availability of immigrant labor. Swiss agricultural production relies heavily on foreign labor. However, the pandemic lockdown caused a shortage of foreign seasonal workers in the spring of 2020. We combine fine-grained voting results from referendums on specific immigration-related policy decisions with variation in seasonal worker needs. We establish that municipalities growing spring crops, and therefore facing severe shortages of foreign labor in spring 2020, voted significantly more in favor of immigration in September 2020 compared to otherwise similar municipalities. Further, using text data from open-ended survey questions, we document how this shock popularized a narrative highlighting the role of foreign workers as complements to the local native ones rather than substitutes. We conclude that economic shocks can influence economic narratives and, ultimately, change attitudes toward immigration.

Weaker prejudice or stronger norms? A field experimental test of the interaction between race and cost in helping situations

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Abstract: Field experiments on helping interactions have sometimes failed to demonstrate discrimination against ethnic/racial minorities. Is this evidence that prejudice has become weaker or rather that social norms against the expression of prejudice have become stronger? We propose that the mixed evidence points to variation in the inhibiting pressure of social norms. Drawing on the low-cost hypothesis in conjunction with studies on ethnic/racial prejudice, we predict discrimination when cost considerations offer a non-racist justification for withholding help from a non-white person. Combining insights from economics, sociology and social psychology, we propose a middle-range theory of normative action that visualizes the actor as possessing the distinct motives of self-interest, the need for (self-) approval, and racial/ethnic prejudice, which have greater or lesser motivational force depending on situational incentives. We performed a large experiment in the streets of Paris ($n > 4,000$) in which twelve testers commonly recognized as arabe, blanc or noir (as validated through a prior online survey) sought help from randomly selected pedestrians in two cost conditions (pre-registration: <https://osf.io/74b6m>). When the cost of helping the tester is minimal, pedestrians do not exhibit racial/ethnic discrimination. But when the cost is more tangible, we find substantial evidence that pedestrians discriminate against arabe and noir testers.

Queen Bee Immigrant: The effects of status perceptions on immigration attitudes

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Abstract: This work examines a seemingly counter-intuitive phenomenon observed in many Western democracies, whereby parts of the immigrant population oppose new waves of immigration. I hypothesize that relative status deprivation - the degree to which a given national/ethnic group is ranked low in the ethnic status hierarchy of the host country - has a negative impact on the attitudes of its members toward even lower-ranked groups. In an experiment run with a sample of participants with an immigration background residing in Germany ($N = 1,159$), I manipulate participants' status perceptions by exposing them to either a positive or a negative evaluation of their national/ethnic in-group, as evaluated by a group of native-majority (German) participants. I show that receiving a negative (rather than positive) evaluation of their in-group leads the participants to express more negative views of the refugees from the Middle East and to significantly decrease their willingness to donate to an organization supporting refugees, while not altering their generosity in a general setting unrelated to immigration. Exploring the mechanisms behind this result, I show that participants rely on the received evaluation of their in-group to update their perception of the descriptive norms surrounding prejudice expression toward low-status groups in the host

society. In line with this, the treatment affects not only the privately held attitudes but also the participants' willingness to publicly express them.

Session C2 Mechanisms of Social Norms: Surveys and Survey Experiments

Social norms about fake news: Do norms of sharing fake news influence truth discernment?

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Abstract: Independently of cognitive ability, expectations about how others interact with misinformation may shape perceptions of truth and falsehood. Past research rarely explored this idea or did so with significant methodological limitations. Nevertheless, this question could uncover an important social determinant of misinformation perception with relevant policy implications. We address this gap by proposing the theoretical feasibility of one or more social norms related to fake news and empirically testing their existence and functioning. In the theoretical section, we define the behaviours these norms might regulate, the sanctions they might entail, and how they might influence truth discernment. Empirically, we test a norm regulating the appropriateness of sharing inaccurate online content using data from three survey experiments in the US and Italy involving about 3000 participants. Participants reported motivations for sharing online news, empirical and normative expectations about others' responses, and judged fake and reliable social media posts while exposed to a norm-manipulating message. Results show that, while there are cross-country differences, this norm is not fully established. Individual motivations for accuracy are associated with better truth discernment, but social expectations play no significant role. The norm treatment yielded mixed but mostly non-significant results.

The Measurement of Risk Aversion: Comparing single-item questions to multiple-item scales.

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Abstract: Risk preferences play an important role in decision making. Normative decision theory (maximizing utility) suggests that individuals should be risk neutral. However, much research suggests that individuals are often overly risk averse (Holt and Laury 2002). Hence, explaining individuals' decision making under uncertainty requires the reliable and valid measurement of risk attitudes. There are different suggestions on how to measure risk attitudes. Dahlbäck (1990) suggested a 10-item scale. Zhang et al. (2019) proposed the 8-item General Risk Propensity Scale (GRiPS). Furthermore, the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) relies on a single-item (Dohmen et al. 2011). The purpose of this paper is to compare the performance of the different measurements with respect to their reliability and validity. In

study I (N = 486), we compared the general 10-item risk-attitude scale by Dahlbäck (1990) with the general single-item measurement implemented in the GSOEP. We test the validity of these two measures by conducting an incentivized lottery choice experiment. Results show that the single-item measurement had better predictive power with regard to the risk behavior in the incentivized lottery as compared to the 10-item scale. In study II, we use a Swiss random population sample (MOSAiCH 2024) to compare the 8-item General Risk Propensity Scale (GRiPS) (Zhang et al. 2019) with the single-item. Both scales are validated by two different single lottery questions.

A Network Perspective on Bias in Social Norm Perception

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Abstract: Social norms, or one's perceptions of what most peers think and do, influence behavior across situations and societies but perceptions are often biased. Network scientists across disciplines have suggested that central people in a community, those with many or well-positioned connections, may be best positioned to accrue information of many kinds from their network ties and thus more accurate in their perceptions of social norms. We propose and test a theory to determine when central individuals will misperceive social norms. Our theory focuses on attributes of the norms themselves, and specifically the degree to which the behavior in question features both similarity (homophily; a greater likelihood to form ties with similar others) and main-effect attraction (acrophily; a greater likelihood to form ties with unidirectionally extreme others). To test our theory, we run a large-scale pre-registered network experiment using 100 networked public goods games (N = 1800) on Empirica.ly's platform online. We find that when networks develop with high similarity and main-effect attraction, central individuals are significantly more biased in their perception of network behavior as compared to networks that develop without one or both of these forces. We supplement this experiment with an agent-based model. Our results illuminate how norms come to be misperceived in communities and the ways in which some norms are more vulnerable to misperception than others.

Session E2 Migration and Ethnic Discrimination

"Between continuity and change – Social norms in collective negotiation processes on migration and integration in Germany"

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Abstract: In Germany, migration and integration are central themes in the negotiation of social norms. Positioned between continuity and change, these norms are shaped by tensions between established societal values and the transformative dynamics brought about by

diversity as a result of migration and integration. Public and media discourses significantly influence this process by framing debates, amplifying conflicts, and creating spaces for dialogue. The paper examines how collective negotiation processes contribute to the construction, reinforcement, or transformation of social norms in the context of migration and integration. It highlights the roles of key actors, including policymakers, media, and social work practitioners. Social work, in particular, serves as a mediator, facilitating understanding between divergent normative perspectives while supporting the implementation of integration measures. Through case studies (such as debates on the public visibility of religious symbols or the role of language policies), the paper explores how the interplay of continuity and change shapes societal cohesion. By analyzing these negotiation processes, the goal is to identify strategies for addressing challenges and fostering constructive transformations in social norms.

Beyond Borders: Understanding Perceptions of Undocumented Immigration among Non-Migrants within the United States and Mexico

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Abstract: This paper gains an understanding of the perceptions of migration among non-migrants within the United States and Mexico. Given the politicization and relevancy of migration in contemporary politics, a deeper sociological analysis is important to understand if perceptions from a migrant-receiving and a migrant-sending country are similar or different and to understand the motivations of these perceptions. This study utilizes quantitative data from the World Values Survey that asked questions centered around policy preferences for migration. Additionally, qualitative interviews were conducted with both American and Mexican citizens with questions focused on perceptions of migration, United States-Mexico migration, and economic reliance between the countries. The analysis has shown a strong correlation between one's home country and their perspective on migration. Both Americans and Mexicans have liberal attitudes about migration but with slight variations. Americans tend to favor surveillance, legality, and security, while Mexicans emphasize empathy and understanding of migrant push and pull factors. Both countries agree on the economic interdependence between the U.S. and Mexico, but Americans view the reliance as lower than Mexicans do. The study concludes that historical, economic, political, and geographic factors influence perceptions of migration, with variation depending on one's country of origin.

Behind the Curtain: Unpacking Racism in Casting Practices

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Abstract: Systemic racism has been the norm in Hollywood. The social consequences that occur cause a shaping and mirroring of racial stereotypes. This study hypothesizes that casting practices in Hollywood reinforce systemic racism, which shapes societal perceptions and

perpetuates Middle Eastern stereotypes. The film industry has yet to be explored through a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens focusing on Middle Eastern racism, which I believe will help reveal systemic racism and fill a gap in literature; what I hope to change with this research is societal racism towards Middle Eastern people. This research is based on a qualitative methodological framework including Critical Discourse Analysis of casting calls, scripts and interviews with marginalized actors and industry professionals. Additionally, the research integrates a review of historical and contemporary films in order to find trends in representation. I want to emphasize the portrayals and discussions in Hollywood regarding Middle Eastern people after 9/11 and how, from that date until today, media has shaped and mirrored racism within society towards Middle Eastern individuals. For norm change analysis, the study will propose longitudinal analysis of representation metrics in Hollywood such as diversity statistics in leading roles and audience perception surveys. This research provides policy-relevant insights into how diversity initiatives in leadership and media representation can promote equitable norm changes and societal inclusivity.

Session C3 Mechanisms of Social Norms: Computational Perspectives

The ambiguity of social situations and normative conflict: Determinants of normative evaluations in the Subreddit r/AmItheAsshole

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Abstract: Social norms regulate human behavior and decision-making, yet much research focuses on how individuals conform to singular norms in clear-cut contexts. This study addresses how people navigate complex situations involving multiple, potentially conflicting norms. Such scenarios challenge individuals to prioritize competing norms and reconcile divergent expectations. Drawing on theories of normative salience and group dynamics, this research examines the interplay between situational complexity, normative clarity, and consensus formation. It hypothesizes that complexity and conflicting norms increase interpretative variance, while well-defined norms foster consensus. Using modern natural language processing (NLP), the study analyzes a large dataset of 500,000 posts and 38 million comments from the subreddit r/AmItheAsshole (AITA). This platform, where users describe real-life situations and seek community judgments, offers a unique opportunity to study normative conflict. The analysis uncovers patterns in how individuals evaluate behavior in ambiguous contexts, revealing mechanisms of conflict and resolution. This work contributes to understanding how individuals interpret and evaluate competing norms in complex social situations, offering insights into the dynamics of normative conflict and resolution.

Environmental Turbulence and Dynamics of Individuals' Compliance with Social Norms: An Agent-based Model on Social Identity in Organizations

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Abstract: Individuals' identification with the collective and, herewith, compliance with the collective's norms serves as a mechanism for mitigating collective action problems. However, environmental turbulence has been argued to be a double-edged sword for social identity – i.e., fueling it due to perceived threats and impeding it from challenges to adapt. Using an agent-based simulation, the paper studies how environmental turbulence affects the dynamics of individuals' compliance with a collective's social norms via social identity and the collective's outcome. The model captures collectives that use institutional arrangements common in organizations. In the model, individuals' compliance to social norms via social identification emerges endogenously from the dynamics in the collective and affects these dynamics; the collective's overall task undergoes exogenous shocks. The model controls for different activation mechanisms for individuals' identification with the collective and its social norms, such as a strong performance orientation or hard-working norms. The results suggest that the activation mechanism, combined with the coordination mode, shapes the effects of turbulence on the dynamics of compliance with social norms via identification and the effects on the collective's outcome. Subject to activation mechanisms and coordination mode, environmental turbulence may lead to declines or even remarkable increases in social identity, underlining the ambiguous role of turbulence.

Acting on Public Sentiment rather than Personal Opinion to Bolster Altruistic Norms

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Abstract: Indirect reciprocity is an important mechanism to promote altruism. Simplified, it means you help me, therefore somebody else will help you (in contrast to direct reciprocity: you help me, therefore I will help you). Evolutionary game theory has shown that indirect reciprocity can be sustained between self-interested agents. This is achieved by judging helpfulness according to norms, hence assigning each agent a reputation. Successful norms judge the donor differently, depending on whether the reputation of the recipient is good or bad. However, these norms struggle if there is no unanimous reputation, but each agent has private opinions. For example, an agent is about to make a decision whether to help. They consider the recipient to be bad and refuse to help them, but many observers consider the recipient to be good instead. These observers will now have a bad opinion about this agent and refuse to help them in the future. Which in turn might cause other observers to have a bad opinion about them. We show a solution to this problem, which we call 'pleasing'. A pleasing agent acts in accordance with others' expectations of their behaviour, instead of being guided by their own opinions. As such, pleasing agents can achieve better reputations than previously considered strategies when there is disagreement in the population. But, although pleasing is a selfish strategy, but it can also stabilize altruism in the population.

Session C4 Mechanisms of Social Norms: Experiments

Risk and Retribution: How Punishment Uncertainty Weakens Norms of Cooperation

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Abstract: Cooperation is essential for societal goals, but often conflicts with self-interest. Costly peer punishment can enforce cooperation norms, but its effectiveness depends on the establishment of a norm of prosocial punishment. Experimental models typically assume certainty in sanctioning, but real-world punishment involves uncertainty for both senders and receivers. This study examines whether prosocial punishment norms can emerge under uncertainty to enforce cooperation and generate social welfare. We also investigate how individuals choose between certain and uncertain sanctioning institutions and how individual preferences and personal contribution norms influence these decisions. Using an online public goods game, participants repeatedly chose between two institutions with certain or uncertain sanctioning. The results show that uncertain sanctions reduce social welfare, with lower levels of cooperation leading to a decreasing preference for uncertainty over time. Under uncertainty, punishment levels were higher, but driven by antisocial punishment, where free riders punish cooperators, and prosocial punishment was lower. We conclude that uncertainty undermines prosocial punishment norms and jeopardises the enforcement of cooperation norms. While most individuals prefer certainty of punishment, less prosocial, risk-taking individuals with weaker personal contribution norms prefer uncertainty, likely to free-ride without consequences.

Outgroup hostility across social identity contexts: determinants of norms for ingroup favouritism.

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Abstract: In a previous experimental study, we documented that social norms in discrimination games vary by social context. In particular, we show that participants rate in-group favouritism as more or less socially appropriate based on the social identity that is in play. The study also included a behavioural task that showed an alignment between social norms and behaviours. Participants opted for decisions that favoured their in-groups more frequently in the social contexts where those decisions were regarded as more socially appropriate. Here, we replicate the experiment under the same conditions and compare the results of elicited norms with a survey implemented in the lab. We develop a survey instrument based on a vignette experiment to test the social appropriateness of in-group favouritism across different social identities. Once validated in the lab, we implemented our instrument via a survey experiment using a stratified Spanish national sample (N=3,000) designed to reflect national demographics, comparing six identity domains: politics, football, education, religion, nationality, and gender. All these identities arguably encompass both ascribed and achieved elements. We show a general relationship between the perception of

social appropriateness of discrimination and the ascription of identities. This analysis is complemented by examining three possible mechanisms.

Session C5 Mechanisms of Social Norms: Experiments and Survey Experiments

If I should share then so should you: social norms and the emergence of a link between prosociality and punishment among children in three societies

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Abstract: An important component of human cooperation is prosocial behaviour enforced by third-party punishment of selfishness, and the link between the two behaviours is thought to be partly motivated by conformity to cooperative social norms. Prior cross-cultural research with children shows that social norms increasingly influence prosociality and punishment in middle childhood, so if cooperative social norms create a link between these behaviours then that link should also strengthen markedly in middle childhood. In this talk I will present data from experimental studies with children aged 4-14 in three different societies (Germany; India; United States) which illuminates the link between children's prosociality in a Dictator Game and punishment in a Third-Party Punishment Game, and explores how this link emerges during childhood and whether this development varies across societies. We found that (i) prosocial choices predicted children's tendency to engage in third-party punishment, (iii) that this link emerged in middle childhood (between ages 7-10), and (iii) that this developmental process was largely similar across societies. I will argue that these data are consistent with a model of human sociality in which our cooperation is at least partly shaped by a universal human psychology for following social norms, where societal variation in local social norms can lead to cultural differences in cooperation.

Social Influence and Protective Behavior during Pandemic: Exploring the Impact of Descriptive Norms

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Abstract: During the COVID-19 pandemic disease-spreading models were crucial tools for governments and health agencies. However, these models faced criticism for not adequately capturing the dynamics of protective behavior like vaccination, self-isolating, and mask-wearing. The few models that did include behavior dynamics were based on vastly different theories. For instance, some models suggested that individuals adhere to descriptive norms of their social environment implying that agents who perceive high protection rates around them also tend to protect more. In contrast, game theory-based models proposed that agents free-

ride on the protective behavior of others, failing to self-protect when others do. To test these competing assumptions about social influence we used a factorial survey design. Participants were exposed to scenario descriptions that varied in the number of bystanders wearing face masks and were asked to evaluate how appropriate they found it to not wear a mask in each scenario. We developed the vignette design to measure each participant's reaction to others' behavior allowing us to capture the heterogeneity in social influence. Our findings enable us to estimate influence-response functions, contributing to the understanding of social norms by examining how the opinion about one's own protective behavior is influenced by the action of others. What is more, our estimates of influence-response functions can directly be fed into formal models of disease dynamics.

Session D1 Inequality and Corruption

(Mis)perceptions of inequality: How reference frames of top salaries impact concerns of citizens

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Abstract: People tend to underestimate the extent of social inequality in societies. However, debates on top salaries demonstrates that also the opposite can happen; people overestimate social inequality. This is evident in the annual controversies surrounding the publication of CEO salaries, which have increased significantly since the 1990s. Most people evaluate top salaries, particularly CEO pay, as undesirable, undeserved, and illegitimate. However, recent studies indicate that the top 1% income share may not have increased as much as perceptions of inequality suggest. This divergence could stem from the dominant reference frame in public discourse, which often emphasizes the absolute growth of CEO pay compared to the average employee (employee view). In contrast, academic discussions also explore alternative perspectives, such as contextualizing CEO pay growth by company size growth (size of stakes view), by the tax contributions of the top 1% (public good view), or by salary growth in other fields like law or entertainment (winner-take-all view). To understand how reference frames affect perceptions, we will conduct an online experiment that visualizes CEO pay trends from these different views. Normative assessments of CEO pay, top incomes and inequality in society, i.e. concerns of citizens, will be measured. People will also comment on the frame shown to them. To capture descriptive norms, half of the respondents see the last three comments from others in their treatment group.

Are Networks Great Equalizers? Social Norms, Networks and Capital Conversion in Elementary Schools

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Abstract: Previous research has highlighted the potential benefits of social capital for improving student learning but has overlooked ways that emerging social norms can convert social capital into cultural capital and thereby influence parenting across socioeconomic contexts. Building upon Bourdieu and Coleman's theories of capital conversion, we examine relationships between one form of social capital (the number of connections among parents in a school) and both simple and complex forms of cultural capital (school-oriented home activities and concerted cultivation) across social class strata. Using nationally representative data from the US Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class of 2010-2011, results show that social network size is significantly and positively associated with both home activities and concerted cultivation, having a stronger association with the latter. Further, network size positively affects home activities across socioeconomic contexts but has stronger associations with concerted cultivation in socioeconomically disadvantaged families. These patterns hold after conducting sensitivity analyses accounting for unobserved confounders. We interpret these findings as suggesting that parent networks can be carriers of social norms that convert forms of capital in disadvantaged contexts.

Perception and Legitimacy of Inequality in Switzerland

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Abstract: My Master's thesis examines the determinants of the perception of inequality in Switzerland. Specifically, it investigates whether migrants perceive economic inequality and its legitimacy differently from native-born residents. The research is guided by System Justification Theory and the Adjustment Hypothesis, which suggest that individuals adapt their perceptions to prevailing circumstances, resulting in a more uncritical and legitimized perception of inequality (Trump 2017). These theories imply that migrants would perceive inequality as more critical and illegitimate compared to natives, and that their perceptions would converge with longer residence in Switzerland. However, both hypotheses are not supported by the data, as the estimated coefficients in linear regression models, although pointing in the expected direction, are not statistically significant. Overall, other factors, such as age, educational level, and political orientation, seem to play a greater explanatory role. This work combines theories on the perception of economic inequality and its legitimacy with an empirical investigation. The data used comes from the 2019 wave of the Social Inequality module of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP Research Group 2021), which surveyed approximately 3,100 residents of Switzerland.

Session G1 Social Crises and Punishment

"Because Greta Thunberg did it and it was very effective"—Children's, adolescents' and adult's reasoning about normative and non-normative environmental protests

Patricia Kanngiesser¹

¹University of Plymouth

Abstract: Climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation are among our most pressing challenges, requiring sustained collective action and societal changes to address them. Non-violent social protests can play a pivotal role in driving societal change (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2012), employing both normative (e.g., demonstrations) and non-normative (e.g., blocking streets) forms of protest (Shuman et al., 2023), and, in recent years, young people have played a key role in revitalising climate protests. In this talk, I will present data from three recent studies investigating children's (6-to-9-years, UK, N=86), adolescents' (10-to-14-years, Germany, N=157), and adults' (UK, N=200) reasoning about normative and non-normative environmental protests. Both children and adults viewed non-normative protests (e.g., not going to school) as more justified when they occurred in the context of environmental protests (than when no context was given). Additionally, adults considered non-normative protests more justified for local causes compared to more distant ones. Adolescents found normative forms of protest more acceptable than non-normative ones and expected their parents and peers to have similar views. I will discuss these studies in the context of norm psychology, as well as the role of non-violent forms of social protest as drivers of social change.

Climate protesters on trial: Analyzing people's sentencing preferences using a longitudinal factorial survey experiment

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Abstract: In January 2020, 12 climate activists who took part in a blockade of a Credit Suisse branch in Lausanne were freed from trespassing charges, a verdict later overruled in higher courts. Both the juridical ambiguity as well as heated reactions by politicians and online commentators raise the question whether such new acts of civil disobedience should be regarded as sanctionable violations of shared norms. We investigate to which extent people uphold legal norms in the context of disruptive climate protests using a longitudinal factorial survey experiment. In each wave, respondents were presented 3 hypothetical individuals who were found guilty of committing different infringements (vandalism, common assault, possession of a small quantity of narcotics, or interference with road traffic during a climate protest). Additionally, individual's migration background, gender, age, financial situation, place of residence, remorse, and criminal record were manipulated in a D-efficient design. Respondents had to decide whether these individuals should get a conditional or unconditional fine or prison sentence or no punishment at all, as well as the corresponding amounts or duration of the sentence. Using mixed and nested logit models, we find that, on average, people would punish taking part in a climate protest similar to simple acts of

vandalism. However, people's sentencing preferences are heterogeneous, underscoring that the underlying legal norms are not uniformly supported.

Framing Social Threats: Analysing Topics and Sentiments in 30 Years of Swiss Media Coverage of Extremism

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Abstract: Extremism poses a complex security threat to contemporary democracies and challenges established social norms of peaceful coexistence. Terrorist events, and the people and groups carrying them out, are often widely covered in the news, even in countries with little history of terrorism. The media's discursive choices when reporting on extremism reflect views about the phenomenon, the societal conflicts that are interwoven with it, its origins, and where justice lies. Recognizing extremism as a significant social threat, Switzerland has invested heavily in counter-radicalization strategies to pre-empt potential threats. Additionally, Switzerland's rich and diverse media landscape offers a unique perspective on how extremism is framed and discussed. Relying on a longitudinal corpus of print and digital media coverage, I identify legal, political, and social topics associated with 30 years of Swiss media coverage of extremism across the political spectrum. Building on the work of Habermas, I use natural language processing techniques to assess the salience of this coverage over time and extract topics and sentiments from 280'000 documents. The findings from these analyses point to key frames that help explain popular perceptions associated with extremist threats in contemporary democracies. They also show that identity-related frames become more prevalent after terrorist attacks in neighbouring countries, often in ways that reinforce exclusionary norms.