



Upcoming Seminars

Monday, 11.12.2017

Departmental Seminar

13.30-14.30

AWI 00.010

Macartan Humphreys, University of Columbia and WZB
(invited by Axel Dreher)

"Information and electoral accountability: experimental
evidence from seven coordinated studies"

Tuesday, 12.12.2017

Economics and Politics Seminar

13.45-14.45

AWI 01.030

Alexander Horn, Aarhus University

"Primacy of politics or market-conformist democracy? New
avenues in the study of partisan effects"

Departmental Seminar

Macartan Humphreys

"Information and electoral accountability: experimental evidence from seven coordinated studies"

Civil society groups emphasize the need for high quality public information on the performance of politicians. But, does information really make a difference in institutionally weak environments? Does it lead to the rewarding of good performance at the polls or are voting decisions going to be dominated by ethnic ties and clientelistic relations? The Information and Accountability Metaketa seeks to answer these questions by implementing a series of experimental projects that assess the role of information in promoting political accountability in developing countries. This Metaketa round was launched in Fall 2013 and will run until Fall 2018. This round awarded seven projects—one each in Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, India, and Mexico, and two in Uganda—ranging in funding from \$175,000 to \$300,000. All of the projects, which have now been completed, used common informational interventions to assess the impact of providing voters with information about politician performance. In addition, each involved at least one complementary intervention. In this round, many projects compared the effects of providing information to individual voters (first arm) with the effects of providing information collectively to groups of voters (second arm). Individual academic papers and policy briefs, as well as a co-authored book and article that present results from the distinct studies in an integrated analysis are forthcoming. For additional information about the Metaketa Initiative, contact Jaclyn Leaver (EGAP Director of Research) at jleaver@berkeley.edu.

Economics and Politics Seminar

Alexander Horn

"Primacy of politics or market-conformist democracy? New avenues in the study of partisan effects"

The presentation takes as its point of departure what we know and what we don't know about the complex linkages between genuinely political decisions and mere reactions to economic pressure(s). The presentation's first main contention is that – despite progress in the "politics matter" research – political scientists and economists alike are severely constrained in terms of the data that is available to model the party- or government ideology. Using the example of German parties' concepts of equality, online crowdcoding is proposed as a solution to this problem. Crowdcoding is a novel technique that allows for fast, affordable, and reproducible online categorization of large numbers of statements. It combines judgements by multiple, paid, non-expert coders to avoid miscoding(s). It has been argued that crowdcoding could replace expert judgements; using the coding of political texts as an example in which both strategies produce similar results. Since crowdcoding yields the potential to extend the replication standard to data production and to "scale" new coding schemes based on a modest number of carefully devised test questions and answers, it is important that we better understand its possibilities and limitations. While previous results for low complexity coding tasks are encouraging, I assess whether

and under what conditions simple and complex coding tasks can be outsourced to the crowd without sacrificing content validity in return for scalability. The simple task is to decide whether a party statement counts as positive reference to a concept – in our case equality. The complex task is to distinguish between five concepts of equality. Equality has been chosen because it exemplifies an issue for which we lack meaningful party positions despite its undisputed relevance. To account for the crowdcoder's contextual knowledge, I vary the IP restrictions in three ways. The basis for the comparisons are 1404 party statements taken from the Manifesto Corpus Data; coded by experts and the crowd (resulting in 30.000 online judgements). I compare the expert-crowd match at the statement- and party level and find that the (aggregated) results are similar even for the complex task, suggesting that complex category schemes can be scaled via crowdcoding. The match is only slightly higher when IP restrictions are used as an approximation of coder expertise

Talks and Research Visits

Christoph Vanberg presented his paper "Legislative bargaining with subjective claims" (mit Anna Merkel) at Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey, December 6.

Joerg Oechssler stayed at Tilburg University December 5-7 to attend a workshop on *Copy Trading* and a PhD defense.

Axel Dreher gave a talk on "Aid on Demand: African Leaders and the Geography of China's Foreign Assistance", at the Development Economics Network Berlin (DENeB), November 30.

Joerg Oechssler gave a talk at the FU Berlin about "Measuring skill and chance in games", November 23.

New Publications

Christoph Vanberg's paper "Legislative bargaining with heterogeneous disagreement values: Theory and Experiments" (with Luis Miller and Maria Montero) is published in *Games and Economic Behavior*, Volume 107, January 2018, Pages 60-92.

**Editorial deadline for issue 30/2017 of the newsletter:
Wednesday, December 13, 2017, 12 p.m.
newsletter@awi.uni-heidelberg.de**

If you would like to receive the newsletter by email,
please contact the address above.