

Sophia Research Workshop on Inequality and Well-Being

Titles and Abstracts

Kohei Kamaga (Sophia University)

Title: Extreme Values, Means, and Inequality Measurement (jointly with Walter Bossert and Conchita D'Ambrosio)

Abstract: We examine some ordinal measures of inequality that are familiar from the literature. These measures have a quite simple structure in that their values are determined by combinations of specific summary statistics such as the extreme values and the arithmetic mean of a distribution. In spite of their common appearance, there seem to be no axiomatizations available so far, and this paper is intended to fill that gap. In particular, we consider the absolute and relative variants of the range, which is based on the difference and the ratio of maximal and minimal incomes; the max-mean orderings defined by the difference and the ratio of maximal and mean incomes; the mean-min orderings that focus on the difference and the ratio of mean and minimal incomes; and quantile-based measures that employ top and bottom income shares and gaps. In addition, we provide some empirical observations that are intended to illustrate that, although these orderings are straightforward to define, some of them display a surprisingly high correlation with alternative (more complex) measures. This observation turns out to apply particularly in the context of some absolute inequality orderings.

Andrew E. Clark (Paris School of Economics, CNRS)

Title: Bechdel at the Box Office: Gender Inequality and Cinema Success in 58 Countries (jointly with Conchita D'Ambrosio and Giorgia Menta)

Abstract: We here establish a link between various country-level measures of gender inequality and the relative success (as measured by Box Office Receipts) of films across different countries. We establish the “gender-equality” of each film using the Bechdel test (which is passed for films with at least two named women in, who talk to each other about something other than a man). In most countries we find that films that pass the Bechdel test have significantly higher box-office receipts (controlling for the film budget). The cinema success of gender-equal films is correlated with a number of established measures of gender equality, including the UN Gender Development Index and Male-Female Labour-Force Participation, so that common measures of women’s position are match revealed preference consumer behaviour in each country, as measured by the choice of different types of films. On the contrary, there is no relationship between Bechdel cinema success and stated gender attitudes.

Conchita D'Ambrosio (University of Luxembourg)

Title: Economic Insecurity and the Rise of the Right (jointly with Walter Bossert, Andrew E. Clark, and Anthony Lepinteur)

Abstract: Economic insecurity has attracted growing attention in social, academic and policy circles. However, there is no consensus as to its precise definition. Intuitively, economic insecurity is multi-faceted, making any comprehensive formal definition that subsumes all possible aspects extremely challenging. We propose a simplified approach, and characterize a class of individual economic-insecurity measures that are based on the time profile of economic resources. We then apply our economic-insecurity measure to data on political preferences. In US, UK and German panel data, and conditional on current economic resources, economic insecurity is associated with both greater political participation (support for a party or the intention to vote) and notably more support for parties on the right of the political spectrum. We in particular find that economic insecurity predicts greater support for both Donald Trump before the 2016 US Presidential election and the UK leaving the European Union in the 2016 Brexit referendum.

Claus Vögele (University of Luxembourg)

Title: The Measurement of Resilience (jointly with Geir B. Asheim, Walter Bossert, and Conchita D'Ambrosio)

Abstract: We provide an axiomatic approach to the measurement of individual resilience. Resilience has been an increasingly important topic in many social sciences but, as of now, there does not seem to be much literature on its theoretical foundations. This paper is intended to fill that gap. After an introduction to the notion of resilience and its possible determinants, we introduce a set of intuitively appealing properties that a resilience measure is required to possess. Our result is a characterization of the specific resilience ordering that satisfies these axioms.