

SUMMARY

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Description of Project:

Professors Dean Karlan and Julian Jamison are co-authoring a paper on laboratory economic experiments in settings in which experimental economists do not typically conduct research (i.e., developing countries). The paper studies experiments that (1) measure risk, time, cognitive, and/or social preferences, and (2) relate these preferences to specific demographics, behaviors, or political interventions. As such experiments provide methods to estimate preferences – and preferences, in turn, affect economic behaviors – research that focuses on experiments in non-traditional settings would have significant implications in the field.

This paper will be published in the next edition of *The Handbook of Experimental Economics* (Kagel and Roth).

Responsibilities:

Given the broad nature of the subject, the research draws from all disciplines in economics – particularly those related to development – as well as studies from psychology, anthropology, public health, and other social sciences. My responsibility was to conduct literature reviews on papers that measure underlying preferences and determine which strains of literature are most relevant to our research. Given my background and interest in economics and psychology, I focused on interdisciplinary social science papers that tied economics with psychological, sociological, and/or anthropological preferences.

Overall Experience and Lessons:

As an economics and psychology double major, I truly appreciated this unique opportunity to better understand the ways economics and psychology intertwine. I did not expect there to be such a huge psychometric literature on preferences that overlap with economic behaviors – and I was pleasantly surprised to find such a deep cross-section between my two fields of study. Furthermore, as I have no prior experience in experimental economics, I was surprised to see just how difficult it is to actually measure preferences in the field; the methodological measures economists must undertake to avoid noise and biases in games or surveys can be surprisingly complex.

On a personal front, I thoroughly enjoyed working with Professors Karlan and Jamison, both of whom were not only incredibly knowledgeable about the subject matter but also patient enough to answer any questions I had despite their busy schedules. I truly enjoyed working with them and learning about the various ways economic and psychological preferences merge.