

KEVIN COOKE

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EDUCATION

Ph.D., Economics, Boston University, Boston MA, May 2018 (expected)

Dissertation Title: *Essays on the influence of experience and environment on behavior*

Dissertation Committee: Jawwad Noor, Barton Lipman, Robert Margo

M.A., Political Economy, Boston University, Boston MA, September 2015

B.A., Economics (*Summa Cum Laude*), Clemson University, Clemson SC, May 2012

B.S., Physics (*Summa Cum Laude*), Clemson University, Clemson SC, May 2012

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Microeconomic Theory, Behavioral Economics, Network Economics, Political Economy

PUBLICATIONS

“Preference discovery and experimentation,” [Job Market Paper]

Theoretical Economics 12(3) (2017): 1307-1348.

WORKING PAPERS

“A network of thrones: kinship and conflict in Europe 1495-1918,” (with Seth Benzell)

May 2017, *submitted*.

“Association-based expected utility,” September 2017.

WORK IN PROGRESS

“On the role of foresight in stable alliance networks”

“Complexity attitudes in games of endogenous information acquisition”

“The compromise effect as taste uncertainty”

EXTERNAL PRESENTATIONS

2017: IHS Research Colloquium at George Mason University

2016: Seminar at Clemson University

Bounded Rationality in Choice at Northwestern University

PhD Conference at the University of Warwick

2015: PhD Conference at the University of Leicester

Midwest Economic Theory Meetings at Pennsylvania State University

Graduate Student Conference at Washington University in St Louis

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Adam Smith Fellowship, Mercatus Center, 2016-2017
Grants to hire MA RA, Boston University, 2014-2015
Dean's Fellowship, Boston University, 2012-2017
EC Harwood Fellowship, American Institute for Economic Research, 2012-2013
Harvey J. Wheeler Outstanding Senior in Economics, Clemson University, 2012
L.D. Huff Outstanding Student in Physics, Clemson University, 2010 and 2011
Phi Beta Kappa, Clemson University, 2011

CONSULTING EXPERIENCE

Systems Engineering Intern, The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab, 2009-2011

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant to Jawwad Noor, Boston University, Fall 2017
Research Assistant to Barton Lipman, Boston University, Fall 2016
Research Assistant to William Dougan, Clemson University, Summer 2012
Research Assistant to Jian Luo, EUREKA! at Clemson University, Summer 2008

REFEREE EXPERIENCE

Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Scandinavian Economics, Mathematical Social Sciences

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor, Principles of Microeconomics, Department of Economics, Boston University, Spring 2018 (scheduled)
Head Teaching Fellow, Principles of Microeconomics, Department of Economics, Boston University, 2 semesters
Teaching Fellow, Principles of Microeconomics, Department of Economics, Boston University, 5 semesters

COMPUTER SKILLS: STATA, R, MATLAB, Perl, LaTeX

CITIZENSHIP: US CITIZEN

REFERENCES

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Boston University
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Professor Barton Lipman
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Preference discovery and experimentation (Job Market Paper) *Theoretical Economics* (2017)

I provide axiomatic foundations for a model of taste uncertainty with endogenous learning through consumption. In this setting, uncertainty is over an unobservable, subjective state space. Preference over lottery-menu pairs is sufficient to identify the state space and the learning process. In this model, the agent is viewed as if he learns the utility of an object upon its consumption. This information is used to improve choice from the follow-on menu. This implies a trade-off between consumption value and information leading to experimentation. I provide a behavioral definition of experimentation. While the literature focuses on identifying subjective states through a demand for flexibility, I show that experimentation also (partially) identifies taste uncertainty.

A network of thrones: kinship and conflict in Europe, 1495-1918 (with Seth Benzell)

We construct a database linking European royal kinship networks, monarchies, and wars to study the effect of family ties on conflict. To establish causality, we exploit decreases in connection caused by apolitical deaths of network important individuals. These deaths are associated with substantial increases in the frequency and duration of war. We provide evidence that these deaths affect conflict only through changing the kinship network. Over our period of interest, the percentage of European monarchs with kinship ties increased threefold. Together, these findings help explain the well-documented decrease in European war frequency.

Association-based expected utility

The marketing and psychology literatures have developed a robust finding that the co-presentation of products causes consumers to associate them. Associated products are evaluated more similarly. Supposing that agents behave according to this evidence, I axiomatically derive a tractable utility model of this association effect. In an application, I study a two product monopolist that can strategically choose whether or not to offer his products under the same brand. I demonstrate that psychological association can provide strict incentives for either brand extension or brand differentiation depending on the joint distribution of product valuations in the market. Appropriate branding strategies allow firms to extract more surplus from consumers when psychological association is present.