

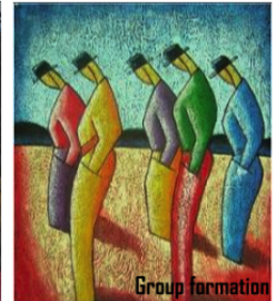
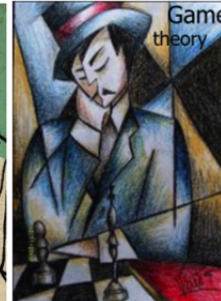
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USCDornsife



Los Angeles Behavioral Economics Laboratory
In honor of Jean-Jacques Laffont



The Los Angeles Behavioral Economics Laboratory (**LABEL**) is a research center led by Dr. Isabelle Brocas and Dr. Juan Carrillo, dedicated to the study of decision-making and its implications on life outcomes and markets. For more information on **LABEL**, please visit our **website**.

Publications



Young Children Build Consensus in Networks with Local Information

Many collective problems require people to coordinate without a central authority and with only partial information. In classrooms, teams, juries or online communities, individuals typically see what a few others are doing, and coordination must emerge through iterative adjustments rather than explicit discussion. Work in social computation has shown that adults can solve difficult global tasks—such as graph colouring and consensus—through simple “choose–observe–adjust” dynamics even when they only observe

local neighbors. Our study shows that very young children (grades 1-2) also converge quickly: conditional on success, unanimity is reached within roughly ten total moves -

much faster than a baseline “wisdom of the crowd” algorithm that deterministically switches to the local majority. This gap is explained by (i) small ‘choice frictions’ (children follow the local majority with high probability but not with certainty) and (ii) ‘role heterogeneity’ (some children -the leaders- consistently moved early to set direction, others -the debaters- adjusted their choice during the game, and a last group -the closers- delayed their moves and often completed convergence).

Illustration by Juliet Brown

Reference: Brocas, I., Carrillo, J.D. & Rios, U. Young children build consensus in networks with local information. Nat Hum Behav (2026).

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-026-02449-w>

The LILA study

Understanding how we transition to adulthood and the origins of biases

It is always a great pleasure to visit the LILA Burbank and Los Feliz campuses to conduct our annual study on the development of decision-making from kindergarten through 12th grade.



Our paradigms are now shifting toward the study of complex decision-making in real-life-like settings. Our goal is to understand what intuitive knowledge children have about physics, biology, and social systems; whether they effectively transfer knowledge learned at school to build better models of the world around them; and how heterogeneous this ability to transfer knowledge efficiently is across children and teens.

LABEL High School Journal

AI Agents as Evidence-Based Adaptive Nudges in Public Policy

Artificial Intelligence often presents as a tool capable of transforming public policy, yet its use in behavioral interventions also creates important ethical and methodological risks. In our latest HSJ entry, written by Ariel Ganelis, we explain how AI can personalize evidence-based nudges, incentives, and feedback to different behavioral profiles while supporting long-term behavioral change. At the same time, repeated AI interactions may unintentionally alter the behaviors researchers seek to measure, raising concerns about manipulation, autonomy, and reliable evaluation. The article argues that AI should only be used under transparent evaluation meaningful consent, and safeguards that protect individual freedom.



AI Agents as Evidence-Based Adaptive Nudges in Public Policy, Ariel Ganelis

Our new collaboration in Madagascar



In Madagascar, behavioral and experimental economics research is also beginning to grow through MABEL Magis Behavioral Lab, a new laboratory developed in collaboration with LABEL Behavioral Lab and the Loyola Behavioral Lab. In recent weeks, more than 600 university students participated in one of the first large-scale protest experiments conducted in the country, exploring how individuals coordinate, respond to inequality, and make collective decisions under uncertainty. The project represents an important step toward strengthening research capacity and expanding opportunities for students in Madagascar to participate directly in international scientific research.

Where our training students are heading to?

Ariel Ganelis

Ariel plans to major in Philosophy at UCLA and prepares to pursue a career in law. He is a dedicated researcher, leader, and social entrepreneur committed to increasing legal access, economic and educational opportunities. Ariel's extensive research portfolio spans behavioral economics, law, linguistic education, and justice. Learning at the Los Angeles Behavioral Economics Laboratory prepared him to build a culturally competent and inclusive world through data analysis, research, and policy formulation.



Fia Tjeen Andersen

Fia is still going to continue pursuing her Economics and Anthropology majors at UCLA for two more years. She will be interning with a Danish startup over the summer called School To Go on a "Proof of Learning" project. School To Go is working on making education accessible to different learning styles across Denmark. I will also be a research assistant for two professors in the Anthropology department at UCLA next year. The LABEL training program has been great in teaching me how to successfully interpret complicated papers and extract essential information efficiently. It has also helped me discover what topics of research would be relevant to me in the future.

LABEL Scholars and Research Associates

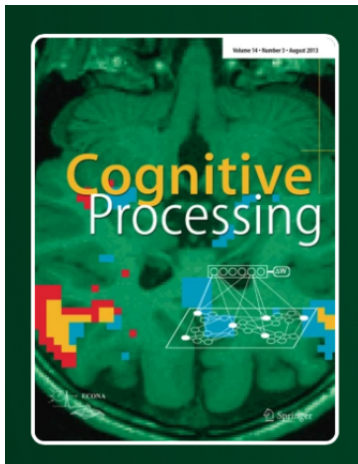
Susie Liu

Susie Liu is a sophomore at the University of Southern California double majoring in Economics/Mathematics and Cognitive Science. She was awarded both the Phi Kappa Phi (PKP) Undergraduate Summer Scholarship and the Summer Undergraduate Research Fund (SURF) to support her research activities this summer. Susie will be joining LABEL as an

Undergraduate Research Assistant, contributing to ongoing projects in behavioral and experimental economics.



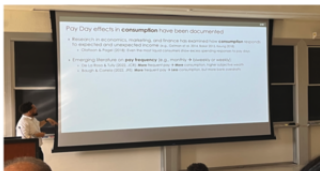
Call for papers - Special Issue on Cognitive Economics



Cognitive Processing invites submissions for a special issue on cutting-edge methods in the science of choice under uncertainty. We seek innovative empirical or theoretical contributions—from economics, psychology, neuroscience, and related disciplines—that advance rigorous experimental or analytical approaches to incentivized decision-making.

For more information, read the call [here](#).

Events



Seminars

Register [here](#) to attend on zoom.



Check our current and future events [here](#).

Dissemination

Check Isabelle's blog "**Biology, Development, and Behavior**" on Psychology Today

Announcements

Education at USC

LABEL disseminates knowledge regarding decision-making and the methods to study it. We sponsor **several courses and programs** for undergraduate, master and PhD students at USC, all designed for students who wish to explore careers in the Behavioral Sciences as consultants, researchers or policy makers.

Training the next generation of students

The **Little Experimentalists Program** organizes events in schools to teach students how to think strategically and to inform parents and teachers about the development of cognition and decision-making.

The **LABEL Training Program** offers students (10th grade and up) the opportunity to participate in research activities in our group. Read about our trainees' experiences **here**. Our lab is accepting **applications** for academic year 2026-2027 **until June 15**.

Participate in our studies

If you are an undergraduate **student** at USC, register **here**.

If you are a **parent living in Los Angeles** and would like your child to participate in our studies, register **here**.



If you are **living in Los Angeles and are 18 and older** and would like to participate in our studies on decision-making over the life cycle, register **here**.

All others, please contact us at **label@dornsife.usc.edu**



USC Dornsife

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