



## Matteo Galizzi : Health before anything else

### Why are we having this meeting at Hôtel-Dieu?

Since February and until July, I am visiting the hospinnomics chair and J-PAL Europe, both based here at Hôtel-Dieu. I'm really glad to be here, as the triad PSE-hospinnomics-J-PAL is one of the few places in Europe bringing together (and within the same physical location) my areas of research interests: randomized controlled experiments and behavioural economics applied to health and social policy. My intention here is to kick-off joint collaborations and initiatives, with the perspective of establishing a long-term partnership. There is a growing interest in experimental and behavioural research in health, and it just makes sense to build networks and join forces in collaborations: London is only two hours away by train...

### How did you start investigating these subjects?

After my PhD in York, I joined the LSE when the Behavioural Research Lab (BRL) was about to be launched. At the LSE, I have worked closely with Paul Dolan (1) to set up the BRL, and, among other things, to constitute a multi-disciplinary inter-university Centre for the Study of Incentives in Health (2), bringing together behavioural and health economists, psychologists, and philosophers. I quickly realized that, although there is plenty of research on the scope and limitations of financial incentives, relatively little is known on the effect that incentives might have on behaviours other than the one directly targeted. Understanding these 'spillover' effects is important for policy purposes. In an experiment, for instance, we found that, not too surprisingly, subjects who were paid to step as many times they could in two minutes, indeed worked harder than a control group without financial incentives. In a subsequent buffet lunch after the experiment, however, the incentivized subjects also ate on average 200 calories more than the control group, thus more than offsetting the extra calories burned by stepping harder.

### There seems to be no clear evidence on the overall impact of incentives: what should be done in terms of policy?

My intuition is that policy-makers should be presented with a flexible and open-minded kit of evidence-based tools. Many governments and public institutions in Europe (not just the UK, but also France, Denmark, Sweden, the European Commission, the OECD, for instance) are increasingly using evidence from randomized controlled experiments and insights from behavioural science to inform decision-making and design policy interventions. This is likely to be the beginning of a revolution in the way social scientists and policy-makers talk to each other. There is an extraordinary potential to partner up for conducting a broad range of experiments, spanning the whole spectrum from lab to field. And 'nudges' (3), as well as other insights from behavioural economics can be suggested and combined with a range of well-established policy tools from 'conventional' economics, such as incentives and regulation, for instance.

### What are you currently working on?

My current research is motivated by the question: how can we make sure that the behavioural economics interventions, which we typically observe in the lab, can be extrapolated to the field and to the "real world"? In order to answer this question, I conduct experiments bridging the lab and the field, and I also link experiments to other types of data. For instance, I am leading an ESRC project that is running, for the first time ever, a randomized controlled experiment with a representative sample of the UK population, and is linking behavioural economics experimental measures with survey data, administrative records, and biomarkers for a large set of respondents within Understanding Society, the world-largest multi-topic panel. I am currently pursuing the same data linking strategy with other leading panel surveys in the UK and in France.

(1) Centre for the Study of Incentives in Health - <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/lsm/index.aspx>

(2) "Nudges" are subtle changes in the choice architecture (e.g. the default options) that can lead to automatic changes in behavior, as proposed by behavioral economists such as Daniel Kahneman, Cass Sunstein, and Richard Thaler.

## Short Curriculum Vitae of Pr. Matteo Galizzi

Dr Matteo M. Galizzi is ESRC Future Research Leader Fellow and Assistant Professor of Behavioral Science at the London School of Economics, where he is affiliated to the LSE Behavioural Research Lab, the Department of Social Policy, LSE Health and Social Care, and the Centre for the Study of Incentives in Health. He obtained a PhD in Economics and an MSc in Econometrics from the University of York (UK), and a first degree in Economics from the University of Pavia, Italy. He held academic appointments at the University of Varese, LIUC, York, University Autònoma of Barcelona, Queen Mary University of London, and University of Brescia, and acted as adviser for many public and private international institutions. He is an experimental and behavioral economist, with a methodological expertise in the design of lab-field experiments, and in the linkage of experimental data.



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