



## NEWSLETTER 2019-08

## CALENDAR:

**Departmental Seminar**

Melanie Lührmann (Royal Holloway):  
*t.b.a.*

Monday, May 13  
16:30–18:00  
H25

**IOS Seminar**

Laura Eras (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München):  
*The effects of the war in Donbas on the social distance between  
linguistic and ethnic groups in Ukraine*

Tuesday, May 14  
13:30–15:00  
WiOS 109 (Landshuter Str. 4)

**Lunch Seminar**

Johanna Mollerstrom (George Mason University):  
*A meritocratic origin of egalitarian behavior*

Wednesday, May 15  
12:00–13:30  
VG 2.35

## ABSTRACTS:

### IOS Seminar

Laura Eras:

*The effects of the war in Donbas on the social distance between linguistic and ethnic groups in Ukraine*

**Abstract:** Has the war in Donbas increased the social distance between linguistic and ethnic groups in Ukraine? This question adds to several debates about Ukrainian society, such as the impact of the war on the social, political and economic development of the country, the importance of ethnic and linguistic identities or the nature of Ukrainian nationalism. Apart from a better understanding of Ukraine, the research on this topic allows us to learn more about how conflicts - both international and domestic - affect attitudes towards outgroups. Analyzing survey data (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology omnibus survey) from 1995-2017, I find that the social distance towards Russian-speaking Ukrainians increased after 2014 for ethnic Ukrainians and Ukrainian-speakers. However, this effect is relatively small and short-term. Interestingly, from the point of view of the Russian-speaking Ukrainians, the social distance towards the Ukrainian-speaking population did not increase. The results indicate that interethnic attitudes only slightly worsened after the beginning of the war. This finding suggests that at least on an interpersonal level ethnic and linguistic cleavages have not deepened during the last years.

### IOS Seminar

Johanna Mollerstrom:

*A meritocratic origin of egalitarian behavior*

**Abstract:** The meritocratic fairness ideal implies that inequalities in earnings are regarded as fair only when they reflect differences in performance. Consequently, implementation of the meritocratic fairness ideal requires complete information about individual performances, but in practice, such information is often not available. We study redistributive behavior in the common, but previously under-studied, situation where there is uncertainty about whether inequality is reflecting performance or luck. We show theoretically that meritocrats in such situations can become more egalitarian in their behavior, and that the degree to which this happens depends on how they trade off the probability of making mistakes and the size of mistakes that they risk making when redistributing under uncertainty. Our laboratory experiments show, in line with our model, that uncertainty about the source of inequality provides a strong egalitarian pull on the behavior of meritocrats. In addition, the external validity of our framework, and the results from the laboratory, are supported in two general population surveys conducted in the United States and in Norway.

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### RegensburgEconNews

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Editorial deadline for Newsletter No. 2019-09:  
Wednesday, May 15 – 11 am

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