



International Union for the
Scientific Study of Population



Max Planck Institute for
Demographic Research

CALL FOR PAPERS

Workshop:

The science of choice - How to model the decision-making process?

Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research
Rostock, Germany

October 28-30, 2015

The Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (MPIDR) and the IUSSP Panel on Microsimulation and Agent-based Modelling in Demography organize a workshop on modelling the individual decision-making process. Our focus is on decisions that shape the life course. Examples of *life decisions* are:

- Choice of lifestyle: how and where to live?
- What friends to choose and how to build a friendship network?
- When to start a long-term partnership and who to partner with?
- To get married, cohabit, or “live apart together” (LAT)?
- To have children or not? To have another child?
- What occupation to choose?
- What job offer to accept? Is it time for a job change?
- To buy or to rent a home?
- When to retire?
- To emigrate or not? Where to emigrate?
- How to prepare yourself for life contingencies?
- To save for old-age care or rely on family and friends?

Life decisions are made under uncertainty. The collection of evidence and the choice of an alternative take time, resources and experience. The access to these prerequisites differs between people, as does the attitude towards uncertainty: from risk-aversion to risk-seeking.

The aim of the three-day workshop is to discuss (a) perspectives on how individuals make decisions and (b) alternative probability models of decision-making processes. Decisions are embedded in a context: Contextual factors and processes influence the decisions individuals make. The outcome of the decision process consists of two components: the decision and the time-to-decision (decision time or deliberation time). The workshop brings together researchers from different disciplines with different perspectives on decision-making.

We invite participants taking a theoretical perspective. Probably the most well-known theory is discrete choice, derived from random utility theory. The theory serves to formalize decisions between discrete alternatives whose properties are not perfectly known and whose properties are perceived differently by different individuals. Recent extensions include hybrid choice models that consider the process and context of decision-making, and the evidence accumulation model, which focuses on the decision time and trade-off between decision time and decision quality. Extensions of the random utility theory that include attitudes, beliefs and context, move the theory closer to Fishbein and Ajzen's theory of reasoned action, which originated in social psychology.

We also invite empirical contributions. We are interested in empirical studies of the dependence of individual decisions on life-course events and social networks.

Finally, we invite researchers who approach decision-making from a modeller's perspective. We are particularly interested in microsimulation models and agent-based models of life choices, including those related to decision-making under uncertainty. In addition, we want to discuss which decision theories and algorithms are testable and what empirically relevant predictors may serve to improve the validity of models.

The workshop will take place from 28 to 30 October, 2015, at the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Germany. **On 28th October 2015, Professor Joan Walker (University of California, Berkeley) will deliver a keynote address entitled "Modeling Choice".**

If you are interested in presenting a paper, please submit online by **15 July 2015** a short 150-word abstract and **upload an extended abstract** (2-5 pages, including tables) or a full paper, which must be unpublished and not already submitted to a journal for publication.

- Submission should be made by the author who will attend the workshop. If the paper is co-authored, please include the names of your co-authors in your submission form.
- The working language of the workshop will be English. Abstracts and final papers should therefore be submitted and presented in English.

Online submissions at: <http://www.iussp.org/en/iussp-seminar-submissions>

Deadline for submissions: 15 July 2015.

You will be notified whether your paper has been accepted by 14 August.

There will be the opportunity to publish an accepted paper in a special issue or a book; details will be provided. The deadline for submission of full papers will be shortly after the workshop.

Participants are expected to pay their own transportation and living costs. However, a limited number of scholarships are available on a competitive basis for outstanding researchers and for those applicants who might otherwise not be able to come. If you would like to be considered for financial support please indicate this at the end of your short abstract. Please also let us know if you would be able to come without financial aid from our side.

For further information please contact Anna Klabunde: decisionmaking@demogr.mpg.de

IUSSP Scientific Panel on Microsimulation and Agent-based Modelling in Demography

Chair: Frans Willekens; *Members:* Jakub Bijak, Alexia Fuernkranz-Prskawetz.