

Armin Falk

ESA Mentoring Session 2020

Three slides

# 1. Research and papers

- It is true: In expectation, the higher the “quality” of a paper, the higher the chances for getting well-published
- Well..., what is a high quality paper/experiment?
  - High internal validity (claims supported by data, i.e., appropriate treats, tests, statistics, obs., ...): Relatively high level of scientific consensus
  - Paper interesting: Much disagreement, cannot be resolved scientifically (see, Max Weber, Science as a Vocation)
  - Results change priors (novelty, surprising, innovation): Some consensus

## 2. Topics

- Work on what you are really interested in: Choice of topics most important decision/responsibility
- Use lab experiments
  - To uncover fundamental human motivation (e.g., fairness, loss-aversion...) and cognition (e.g., biases, memory...)
    - It is here, where the lab is unrivaled (Falk/Heckman (2009), Lab Experiments Are a Major Source of Knowledge in the Social Sciences, *Science*, Vol. 326, Issue 5952, pp. 535-538)
  - Or as incentivized measures (e.g., preferences in childhood development)
- Do not test complicated/“realistic” models
- Use comprehensive yet simple design
- Combine (lab) experimental data with survey data, field observations or other types of data (exploit complementarities)

# 3. Writing

- Motivate your findings: tell a convincing story and get people interested in reading your paper
- Readability and clarity (e.g., instructions, misunderstandings are typically your fault...), have a native speaker double check
- Prioritize; and work sequentially
- Re-submit quickly