

SEBASTIAN DENGLER

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Current Position

Post-Doctoral Researcher, Tilburg Institute for Law, Technology and Society (TILT), Tilburg University Since 2017

Education

Ph.D. in Economics, Tilburg University, Supervisors: Jens Prüfer, Jan Potters	2013–2017
M.Sc. (Research Master) in Economics (<i>with distinction</i>), Tilburg University	2011–2013
B.Sc. in Management, Philosophy & Economics, Frankfurt School of Finance & Management	2007–2011

Working Papers

“Consumers’ Privacy Choices in the Era of Big Data” (with J. Prüfer)

Recent progress in information technologies provides sellers with detailed knowledge about consumers’ preferences, approaching perfect price discrimination in the limit. We construct a model where consumers with less strategic sophistication than the seller’s pricing algorithm face a trade-off when buying. They choose between a direct, transaction cost-free sales channel and a privacy-protecting, but costly, anonymous channel. We show that the anonymous channel is used even in the absence of an explicit taste for privacy if consumers are not too strategically sophisticated. This provides a micro-foundation for consumers’ privacy choices. Some consumers benefit, but others suffer from their anonymization.

“Climate Policy Commitment Devices” (with R. Gerlagh, S. Trautmann, and G. van de Kuilen)

We develop a dynamic resource extraction game that mimics the global multi-generation planning problem for climate change and fossil fuel extraction. We implement the game under different conditions in the laboratory. Compared to a “liberal” baseline condition, we find that policy interventions that provide a costly commitment device or reduce climate threshold uncertainty reduce resource extraction. We also study two ethics conditions to assess the underlying social preferences and the viability of ecological dictatorship. Our results suggest climate-change policies to focus on investments that lock the economy into carbon-free energy sources.

Work in Progress

“Predictive Algorithms and Consumer Behavior”

I analyze consumer behavior in a laboratory experiment where subjects face a computerized seller. Unless consumers make use of a costly hiding technique to hide (some) of their valuations for the offered good, the seller’s algorithm implements perfect price discrimination. Depending on the hiding cost treatment, Nash equilibrium behavior is characterized by either complete or partial hiding by consumers. Addressing cognitive constraints often present in privacy choices, I consider two alternative explanations: level-k thinking and reinforcement learning. I find substantial deviations from the Nash predictions. While there is some evidence for level-k thinking measures to explain subjects’ hiding choices, the evidence for reinforcement learning is stronger and suggests that learning is driven by having realized a negative payoff before. A within-subject policy treatment resembling privacy-by-default mechanisms leads to a strong increase in hiding behavior: among various Nash equilibria, the majority of subjects chooses the one with maximal hiding behavior.

Fellowships and Awards

Privacy Scholars Fellowship at George Mason University Law & Economics Center (12 000 \$)	2015–2016
Best TILEC Master Thesis: “The Ostrich Effect in the Economics of Privacy” (500 €)	2013
CentER Scholarship (10 000 € in total)	2011–2013
Scholarship for Students from Evangelisches Studienwerk e. V. Villigst (35 000 € in total)	2007–2013

Research Memberships

Tilburg Law and Economics Center (TILEC), Senior Member Behavioral and Experimental Economists @ Tilburg	Since 2017
Tilburg Law and Economics Center (TILEC), Junior Member	2013-2017

Refereed Conferences and Invited Talks

2017: Department Seminar at Telecom ParisTech · 44th Conference of the European Association for Research in Industrial Economics · European Winter Meeting of the Econometric Society (EWMES)

2016: Economic Science Association (ESA) European Meeting · The Choice Lab PhD Workshop at Norwegian School of Economics (NHH) · 20th Annual Conference of the Society for Institutional & Organizational Economics (SIOE) · 14th ZEW Conference on The Economics of Information and Communication Technologies · Program on Economics & Privacy: Digital Information Policy Scholars Conference · ENTER Jamboree · 2nd Workshop on Industrial Organization in the Digital Economy

2015: Research Roundtable for Economists on Law & Economics of Privacy and Data Security · 19th Annual Conference of the International Society for New Institutional Economics (ISNIE) · 9th Competition Law and Economics European Network (CLEEN) Workshop · ENTER Exchange Seminar

2014: 13th Session of the European School on New Institutional Economics (ESNIE)

Teaching Experience

Course Coordinator & Lecturer in Advancing Society: Innovation <i>Tilburg University, B.Sc. Economics & Business Economics</i>	2017
Lecturer in Business Taxation and Decision-Making Processes <i>Tilburg University, M.Sc. International Business Tax Economics</i>	2013–2016
Teaching Assistant in Industrial Organization <i>Tilburg University, B.Sc. Business Economics</i>	2014–2016
Supervisor Bachelor Thesis <i>Tilburg University, B.Sc. Economics</i>	2015
Teaching Assistant in Theories and Models in Rational Decision-Making I <i>Frankfurt School of Finance & Management, B.Sc. Management, Philosophy & Economics</i>	2010
Teaching Assistant in Game Theory I & Game Theory II <i>Frankfurt School of Finance & Management, B.Sc. Management, Philosophy & Economics</i>	2009

Departmental Service

Faculty Council Representative, Tilburg University	2016–2017
Chairman of the Graduate Students Society (GSS), Tilburg University	2014–2016
Graduate Students Representative, Tilburg University	2011–2014

Personal

Citizenship:	German
Languages:	German (native), English (fluent), Dutch (good), Spanish (intermediate)