

Religious Identity & Cultural Dynamics

Jean-Paul Carvalho

Wednesday, June 6th 2018
Humanities Gateway 1002
12:30 - 1:30pm

ABOUT THE TALK

Religious identity not only defines group boundaries but also imposes costs on members. We examine the strategic role of costly religious sacrifice and stigma. Strict religious clubs are defined by costly entry requirements and participation rules, including stigmatizing forms of dress, speech and diet. In the canonical model (Iannaccone 1992), these prohibitions and proscriptions are designed to solve incentive problems associated with collective production by (1) screening out non-cooperators and (2) inducing substitution from outside activity to group activity. Recent research identifies three new strategic functions of religious costs: (3) social sorting, (4) religious commitment, and (5) cultural resistance. This produces new insights into cultural dynamics and explanations for exotic religious beliefs, oppositional identity, political mobilization by religious groups, and religious radicalization. All strategic functions of religious identity are examples of the theory of the second best.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

JEAN-PAUL CARVALHO is Associate Professor of Economics at the University of California, Irvine and Interim Director of the Institute for Mathematical Behavioral Sciences. His work is on the economics of culture, identity and religion. He is co-editor of the volume *Advances in the Economics of Religion* (Palgrave 2018), Associate of the Network for Economic Research on Identity, Norms and Narratives (ERINN), and Faculty Fellow of the Association for Analytic Learning about Islam and Muslim Societies (AALIMS). He was educated at the University of Oxford (DPhil, MPhil), as a Monash scholar, and the University of Western Australia. Before joining UC Irvine in 2011, he was a Postdoctoral Fellow in Economics at Oxford and was awarded a Robert Solow Fellowship by the Cournot Centre for Economic Studies, Paris.



*Event is free and open to the public.
Refreshments will be served.*