

# Max Lobeck

## Contact Information:

Paris School of Economics  
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Languages: English, German (native), French

## Research interests:

Behavioral economics, Experimental Economics  
Labor Economics, Public Economics

## PSE Job Market contact:

Placement Officer: Prof. David Margolis, david.margolis@psemail.eu  
Placement Administrator: Veronique Guillotin, veronique.guillotin@psemail.eu

## Doctoral Studies

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- 2017-**                      **Paris School of Economics**  
Ph.D. Candidate, Defense expected in Spring 2021  
Thesis title: *Attitudes towards Inequality*  
Advisors: Nicolas Jacquemet and Claudia Senik
- Fall 2019**                **University of California Berkeley – Department of Economics**  
Visiting Scholar, Host: Shachar Kariv
- Summer 2019**        **WZB Berlin – Research Unit Market Behavior**  
Visiting Scholar, Host: Dorothea Kübler

## Research Work

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*Abstracts are on the last two pages*

- Job Market Paper**        *Motivating Beliefs in a Just World*
- Working Paper**        *Principals' distributive preferences and the incentivization of agents*  
with Sophie Cetre
- Working Paper**        *How Laws Affect the Perception of Norms: Empirical Evidence from the Lockdown*  
joint with Roberto Galbiati, Emeric Henry and Nicolas Jacquemet, Press: *VoxEU*
- Published**            *Preferences over income distributions: Evidence from a choice experiment*  
published in the Journal of Economic Psychology (2019) with Sophie Cetre, Claudia Senik and Thierry Verdier

## References

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### Shachar Kariv

Professor at University of California, Berkeley  
kariv@berkeley.edu

### Roberto Galbiati

Research Professor at CNRS-Sciences Po  
roberto.galbiati@sciencespo.fr

### Nicolas Jacquemet

Professor at PSE  
nicolas.jacquemet@univ-paris1.fr

### Claudia Senik

Professor at PSE  
senik@pse.ens.fr

## Pre-Doctoral Studies

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<b>2015-2017</b>	<b>Paris School of Economics</b> M.Sc. in Economics (Highest Honors)
<b>2011-2015</b>	<b>Humboldt University Berlin</b> B.Sc. in Economics (very good)

## Fellowships and Grants

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<b>2020</b>	CEPREMAP grant for “Motivating Beliefs in a Just World”
<b>2019</b>	Mobility grants from PSE and University Panthéon-Sorbonne to visit UC Berkeley
<b>2019</b>	EUR grant for “Principals’ distributive preferences and the incentivization of Agents” (joint with Sophie Cetre)
<b>2019</b>	FAIR Spring School in Behavioral Economics at UC San Diego, Rady
<b>2018</b>	Travel grant for outstanding PhD students awarded by the Île-de-France region
<b>2018</b>	CEPREMAP and OSE grant for “Principals’ distributive preferences and the incentivization of agents” (joint with Sophie Cetre)
<b>2017</b>	Full 3-year Ph.D. grant at University Paris 1 Panthéon–Sorbonne (extended)
<b>2013</b>	Mobility grant of the Economic Society Humboldt University

## Teaching

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<b>2018–2021</b>	<b>Game Theory (Tutorials)</b> Graduate level – Master Economics and Psychology (PSE, Univ. Panth.-Sorbonne)
<b>2020–2021</b>	<b>Econometrics (Tutorials)</b> Magistere (undergrad. honors program) - Univ. Pantheon-Sorbonne (in French)
<b>2018–2019</b>	<b>Microeconomics I (Tutorials)</b> Undergraduate level - Univ. Pantheon-Sorbonne (in French)
<b>2020</b>	<b>Microeconomics II (Tutorials)</b> Undergraduate level - Univ. Pantheon-Sorbonne (in French)
<b>2019–2021</b>	<b>Winter School (Workshop Instructor)</b> Graduate level – Master Economics and Psychology (PSE, Univ. Panth.-Sorbonne)

## Seminars and Conferences

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<b>2021</b>	SMYEE (Bologna), EBE summer meeting (Munich) (both scheduled)
<b>2020</b>	Behavior Workgroup (PSE), ESA - World (online), PSE (JMC Seminar)
<b>2019</b>	ESA - N.A. (LMU), MC Seminar (WZB Berlin), WIP (PSE), Behavior Workgroup (PSE), ASFEE (TSE)
<b>2018</b>	M-BEES (Netherlands), AFSE (France), RES Junior Symposium (U.K.), RGS Doctoral Conference (Germany), WIP (PSE), Behavior Workgroup (PSE), Dijon Organization and Markets Workshop (BSB), OECD (TrustLab Workshop)

## Professional Activities

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- Academics**
- Experimental Economics Reading group**
    - Organizer of the Experimental Economics reading group at PSE
  - Refereeing activity**
    - Experimental Economics, Canadian Journal of Economics, Theory and Decision, *Révue Économique*
  - Doctorissimes 2018 and 2019**
    - Co-organizer of an annual doctoral conference at PSE

## Languages and Computer Skills

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- Languages** German (native), English (proficient), French (fluent)  
**Computer** STATA (proficient user), R (advanced), oTree (proficient), zTree (advanced)

## Research Work – Abstract

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### *Motivating Beliefs in a Just World* Job Market Paper

This paper studies whether individuals distort their beliefs about the relative importance of effort and luck to motivate future effort. To that end, I develop a novel experimental design where past experience of success or failure serves as a noisy signal about the true importance of effort in success. To test whether beliefs are distorted to motivate future effort, I vary the moment in time when subjects are informed about a real effort task to be performed later in the experiment. Subjects who receive the information before belief elicitation can, hence, use elicited beliefs to motivate effort in the later task. The results show that, in this case, individuals are more likely to believe that their effort is important for success. Motivating belief distortion is particularly pronounced for subjects who receive discouraging news about the true state of the world. I additionally test whether motivating belief distortion affects subjects' willingness to distribute money between two *other* individuals as a third-party spectator. I do not find evidence that distributive behavior differs across the two treatment groups. The results of this paper advance our understanding of how individuals form luck-effort beliefs by showing that they do not only depend on past or current events but also on what they expect from the future.

### *Principals' distributive preferences and the incentivization of agents* joint with Sophie Cetre

Do principals' distributive preferences affect the allocation of incentives within firms? We document a robust relationship between French employers' fairness preferences and the incentive contracts they choose for their workers. To establish causality, we run a Principal-Agent lab experiment in a firm-like setting. Principals must choose piece rate wage contracts for two workers that differ in terms of ability. Workers have to choose an effort level that is non-contractible. Principals are either paid in proportion to the output produced (Stakeholder treatment) or paid a fixed wage (Spectator treatment). We study how principals make trade-offs between incentive concerns (motivating workers to maximize output) and their own normative distributive preferences. We find that, despite the firm-like setting and the moral hazard situation, principals do hold egalitarian concerns, but they are sensitive to both extensive and intensive margin incentives. We characterize the heterogeneity in distributive preferences by

positing a utility function that incorporates the principal's other-regarding preferences and we estimate it using a finite mixture model. We use these estimates to make counterfactual analyses and show that principals' egalitarian preferences gain in efficiency when workers hold relative income concerns.

*How Laws Affect the Perception of Norms: Empirical Evidence from the Lockdown*

joint with Roberto Galbiati, Emeric Henry and Nicolas Jacquemet, *VoxEU-column*

Laws not only affect behavior due to changes in material payoffs, but they may also change the perception individuals have of social norms, either by shifting them directly or by providing information on these norms. Using detailed daily survey data and exploiting the introduction of lockdown measures in the UK in the context of the COVID-19 health crisis, we provide causal evidence that the law drastically changed the perception of the norms regarding social distancing behaviors. We show that this effect of laws on perceived norms is mostly driven by an informational channel and that the intervention made perceptions of social norms converge to the actual prevalent norm.

*Preferences over income distributions: Evidence from a choice experiment*

Journal of Economic Psychology, joint with Sophie Cetre, Claudia Senik and Thierry Verdier

Using a choice experiment in the lab, we assess the relative importance of different attitudes to income inequality. We elicit subjects' preferences regarding pairs of payoff distributions within small groups, in a firm-like setting. We find that distributions that satisfy the Pareto-dominance criterion attract unanimous suffrage: all subjects prefer larger inequality provided it makes everyone weakly better off. This is true no matter whether payoffs are based on merit or luck. Unanimity only breaks once subjects' positions within the income distribution are fixed and known ex-ante. Even then, 75% of subjects prefer Pareto-dominant distributions, but 25% of subjects engage in money burning at the top in order to reduce inequality, even when it does not make anyone better off. A majority of subjects embrace a more equal distribution if their own income or overall efficiency is not at stake. When their own income is at stake and the sum of payoffs remains unaffected, 20% of subjects are willing to pay for a lower degree of inequality.