

# Matthew Robson

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Research Interests    Inequality, Experimental Economics, Prosocial Behaviour, Revealed Preferences, Experimentics, Health Economics, Multidimensional Poverty, Distributive Justice.

Education            **University of York** - PhD Economics - (*2014-2018*)  
Thesis: “Inequality Aversion and Self-Interest: An Experimental Approach”.  
Supervisor: John Bone; Advisory Panel: John Hey & Richard Cookson.  
Viva: Erik Sørensen (NHH) and Andrew Jones (York) - Pass with No Corrections.  
**University of York** - MSc Health Economics, Merit - (*2013-2014*)  
**Bangor University** - BA Hons History and Economics, First Class - (*2010-2013*)

Employment        **EQUIPOL, University of York** - (*2018-present*)  
Centre for Health Economics and Department of Health Sciences.  
Research Fellow; Project: Quasi-Experimental Evaluations of Health Inequality.  
**OPHI, University of Oxford** - (*2014-present*)  
Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative.  
Part-time Research Assistant; Project: Multidimensional Poverty.

Teaching            **University of York** - (*2015-present*)  
**Department of Economics** - Ellis-Hunter Teaching Scholar (*2015-2019*)  
· Experimental Economics; Microeconomics 1 & 2; Economics 2: Micro; Econometrics 2.  
· Acknowledgement of Teaching Excellence, 2016-19 & Aronson Teaching Prize, 2016-18.  
**Centre for Health Economics** - MSc Dissertation Supervisor (*2018/19*)  
· “Evaluating the Distributional Effect of the Smoking Ban on Birth Weight”  
**Department of Health Sciences** - Research Staff Teaching Assistant (*2018/19*)  
· Further Regression Analysis (MSc Level)

Publications        · Robson, M., M. Asaria, R. Cookson, A. Tsuchiya and S. Ali, (2017), ‘Eliciting the level of health inequality aversion in England’, *Health Economics*, 26(10), 1328-1334.

Awards and Grants    · ESRC Advanced Quantitative Methods (+3) Studentship, 2014-2017.  
· ESRC Overseas Institutional Visit, The Choice Lab; Bergen, Norway, 2017.  
· ESRC Company Internship, The Field Laboratory; Mbale, Uganda, 2016.  
· NIHR Masters Studentship in the Economics of Health, 2013-2014.  
· William and Myfanwy Eames Prize, Economics, Bangor University, 2013.  
· Charles Mowat Memorial Prize, History, Bangor University, 2013.

Conference Co-organiser    · 3rd IRNEP Conference, University of York, September 2019.  
· Foundations of Utility and Risk (FUR), University of York, June 2018.  
· 2nd IRNEP PhD Conference, University of York, October 2016.  
· 1st IRNEP PhD Conference, University of Reading, October 2015.

- Presentations
- Center for Health Decision Science (Invited Speaker), Harvard University, USA, 2019.
  - Nordic Conference on Behavioural and Experimental Economics, Denmark, 2018.
  - Summer School on Socioeconomic Inequality, University of Bonn, Germany, 2018.
  - Foundations of Utility and Risk (FUR), University of York, UK, 2018.
  - Young Economists' Meeting, Masaryk University, Czech Republic, 2018.
  - RES PhD Meeting, Westminster Business School, London, UK, 2017.
  - The Choice Lab (Invited Speaker), Norwegian School of Economics, Norway, 2017.
  - Spring School in Behavioural Economics, USCD, San Diego, USA, 2017.
  - OPHI (Invited Speaker), University of Oxford, UK, 2017.
  - Preferences, Personality and Moral Behaviour, The Choice Lab, Norway, 2016.
  - Health Economics Study Group Conference, University of Leeds, UK, 2015.
- External
- Co-founder of the Interdisciplinary Research Network for Economists and Philosophers (IRNEP).
  - Internship, Centre for Health Economics and Medicines Evaluation (CHEME), Bangor University, 2013.
- Working Papers
- Robson, M., (2017), 'Inequality Aversion, Self-Interest and Oneness: A Ugandan Lab-in-the-Field Experiment', *DEERS Discussion Paper*, 17(12).
  - Alkire, S. and M. Robson, (2018), 'On data availability for assessing monetary and multidimensional poverty', *OPHI Research in Progress*, 52a.
  - Robson, M. and J. Bone, (2018), 'Giving to Varying Numbers of Others', *DEERS Discussion Paper*, 17(12).
- Research In Progress
- Robson, M., T. Doran and R. Cookson, 'Decomposing Conditional Treatment Effects: The Smoking Ban in England'.
  - Alkire, S. and M. Robson, 'Poverty Index Mismatches: Distributional Changes
  - Robson, M. and J. Bone, 'Inequality Aversion and Self-Interest: Multiple Designs and Alternate Perspectives'.
  - Robson, M., 'Giving to Others and the Future Self'.
- Refereeing
- *Health Economics, The European Journal of Health Economics, Social Science and Medicine.*
- Languages and Skills
- English (native).  
 MatLab, Stata, Mata, R, Z-Tree, Survey Solutions, L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X, Corel-Draw, Office.
- References
- |  |  |
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| Mr John Bone                             | Professor John Hey                       |
| Economics and Related Studies            | EXEC, Economics and Related Studies      |
| University of York                       | University of York                       |
| john.bone@york.ac.uk, 01904 323770       | john.hey@york.ac.uk, 01904 323786        |
| Professor Sabina Alkire                  | Professor Bertil Tungodden               |
| OPHI, International Development          | FAIR, Department of Economics            |
| University of Oxford                     | Norwegian School of Economics            |
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## Research Papers

### *Inequality Aversion, Self-Interest and Oneness: A Ugandan Lab-in-the-Field Experiment* Job Market Paper

Preferences relating to *inequality aversion*, *self-interest* and *oneness* (the closeness of connection to others) are incorporated in a structural model and estimated in order to explain prosocial behaviour. An incentivised lab-in-the-field experiment was run in Mbale, Uganda (n=156), with both general population and student samples. The experiment was a modified three-person dictator game, run on touch-screen tablets. Decision problems were repeated (54 rounds) to ensure individual-level preferences could be estimated; using the Dirichlet distribution to rationalise *noisy* behaviour. Two within-subject treatments varied if the identity of the ‘recipients’ was *anonymous* or *known*. Results find extensive heterogeneity in prosocial behaviour, which is accounted for through individual preference parameters. On average, there is a substantial regard for others with a preference for reducing inequality, rather than increasing efficiency. Oneness is found to have large and significant effects on giving; with distinctions between *self-other* and *between-other* trade-offs emerging.

### *Eliciting the Level of Health Inequality Aversion in England* with M. Asaria, R. Cookson, A. Tsuchiya and S. Ali.

Health inequality aversion parameters can be used to represent alternative value judgements about policy concern for reducing health inequality versus improving total health. In this study, we use data from an online survey of the general public in England (n = 244) to elicit health inequality aversion parameters for both Atkinson and Kolm social welfare functions. We find median inequality aversion parameters of 10.95 for Atkinson and 0.15 for Kolm. These values suggest substantial concern for health inequality among the English general public which, at current levels of quality adjusted life expectancy, implies weighting health gains to the poorest fifth of people in society six to seven times as highly as health gains to the richest fifth.

### *Giving to Varying Numbers of Others* with J. Bone.

We test the extent to which giving behaviour changes as the number of recipients increases. Using a modified N-person dictator game, in an incentivised laboratory experiment, *individual-level* preference parameters are estimated within five alternative utility functions. The *goodness-of-fit* and *predictive accuracy* of each model are analysed, while *noise* in decision-making is explicitly modelled with the Dirichlet distribution. Results show that the number of recipients significantly affects aggregate giving behaviour; but individual behaviour is complex and extensively heterogeneous. We show this behaviour can be well explained, fit and predicted, through estimating individual-level preferences, identifying the ‘best’ models and formally modelling noise.

### *On Data Availability for Assessing Monetary and Multidimensional Poverty* with S. Alkire.

Data availability plays a crucial role in the fight against poverty. Yet, it lags behind the data available on most other economic phenomena. We catalogue and review existing data availability aiming to break the cycle of outdated poverty data. We identify countries that generate and analyse frequent and accurate poverty data to highlight potential improvements. Results show data for both monetary and multidimensional poverty dramatically increased since 1980. Sixty countries now produce annual datasets, while internationally comparable short surveys and regional harmonised variable definitions are being implemented. These existing resources and experiences can inform much-needed efforts to expand data availability.