What's In A Name?

Experimental Evidence on Discrimination

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Broader Question: Do People Discriminate?

- Want to see if people treat each others differently based on
  - Ethnicity
  - Gender
- Surveys not a useful tool
  - People might be hesitant to admit that they do discriminate against others, or might claim behaviors they don't display (e.g. towards Arabic persons)
  - People's perceptions of their own discriminatory behavior may differ from actual behavior
    - May be unaware of their own discriminatory behaviors

Our Measurement Tool

- Dictator Game
  - One player chooses how to allocate $10 between themselves and a second player
  - Second player has no say in allocation
  - What would you do if you were the dictator?
  - Economists expect first player to keep it all
  - Many previous studies have shown that many subjects give money away
    - Dictators give approximately $3 on average and roughly 1/3 keep all the money
  - This makes Dictator game a good candidate for measuring discrimination

Earlier Research with Names

- Fryer & Levitt, QJE 2004
  - "The Causes and Consequences of Distinctively Black Names"
  - Do Black names cause economic disparity
  - Black Name Index = P(name|Black)/[P(name|Black)+P(name|White)]
  - Controlling for other factors (ethnicity, teenage motherhood, education…) having a black name does not cause lower economic outcomes

In Contrast

- Bertrand and Mullainathan, working paper 2004
  - Sent out resumes to help-wanted ads in Boston and Chicago
  - Used white sounding (Emily or Greg) or black sounding (Lakisha or Jamal) names on identical resumes
  - White names need to send out 10 resumes to get a callback while black names need 15
  - Smaller racial gap when employers are located in African/American communities

Our Design – First Movers

- Play five, independent dictator games
  - Split $10 five times, each time know the “first name” of the second mover who receives the money
  - 4 “calibrated” names (explained below)
  - 1 “actual” counterpart
  - Were paid for the “real” decision
  - Knew that they would be paid only once, but had no way to tell for which decision they would be paid

For Example

- Split $10 between:
- You: $ and Cesar: $

This was repeated 5 times on 5 different slips of paper with five different names

Second Movers (Real)

- Told how much money they were allocated
- Told the other four names that were given to their dictator
- Asked to guess how much money was allocated to each name
- Paid $1 for each correct guess

For Example

- The person you were paired with was also given 4 other names to split $10 with. In the spaces below, please indicate how much money you think each person was given. You will receive $1 for every correct answer.

Name	$
Matthew	_____
Lauren	_____
Maria	_____
Mohamed	_____

Getting the Names – step 1

- Conducted a survey in a 560 student freshman economics course
- Students were asked to provide names that were “typical” of gender/ethnicity pairs

Example:

What is a typical name for a Hispanic woman?

Getting the Names – step 2

- Took frequently mentioned names, edited them (described below), and surveyed a second 560 student freshman economics course
- Students asked to identify gender and ethnicity of each name
- Names that had highest agreement on this survey were used in experiment (all better than 90%)
- Two names chosen for each gender/ethnicity pair

Example of second survey:

What is Miguel's gender? (A if male, B if female)

What is Miguel's ethnicity? (A if African/American, etc.)

The Names

(* means also used by Bertrand)

Men

- Matthew*
- Brian
- Mohammed
- Mahdi
- Miguel
- Jose
- Jermaine*
- Tyrone*
- Kyungsoo
- Jing

Women

- Lauren*
- Emily*
- Raha
- Ahmina
- Maria
- Juanita
- Sheniqua
- LaTonya*
- Xiang
- Meekyung

Getting the Names - complications

- Some frequently mentioned names were not used in the second survey
- For example, the most commonly mentioned names for Arabic males were
  - Osama
  - Alladin
- These names were edited off of the second survey

Getting the Names - complications

- “Michael” was frequently mentioned as typical of both African/American and Caucasian males
- Was not included on second survey because it would not have been clearly associated with a single ethnicity
- Theory: Michael was very focal because it is the name of the star quarterback of the football team

Getting the Names - complications

- Only claim that these names signal gender and ethnicity at Virginia Tech at time of survey
  - Results might be different at other universities
  - Expect they would be different in other countries
- First related difficulty – VT students couldn't think of Arabic and Asian names (on first survey)
  - Solution: We added some names in these categories
- Second related difficulty – VT students can identify Arabic and Asian names, but not their gender (on second survey)
  - Solution: Meekyung (Michelle)

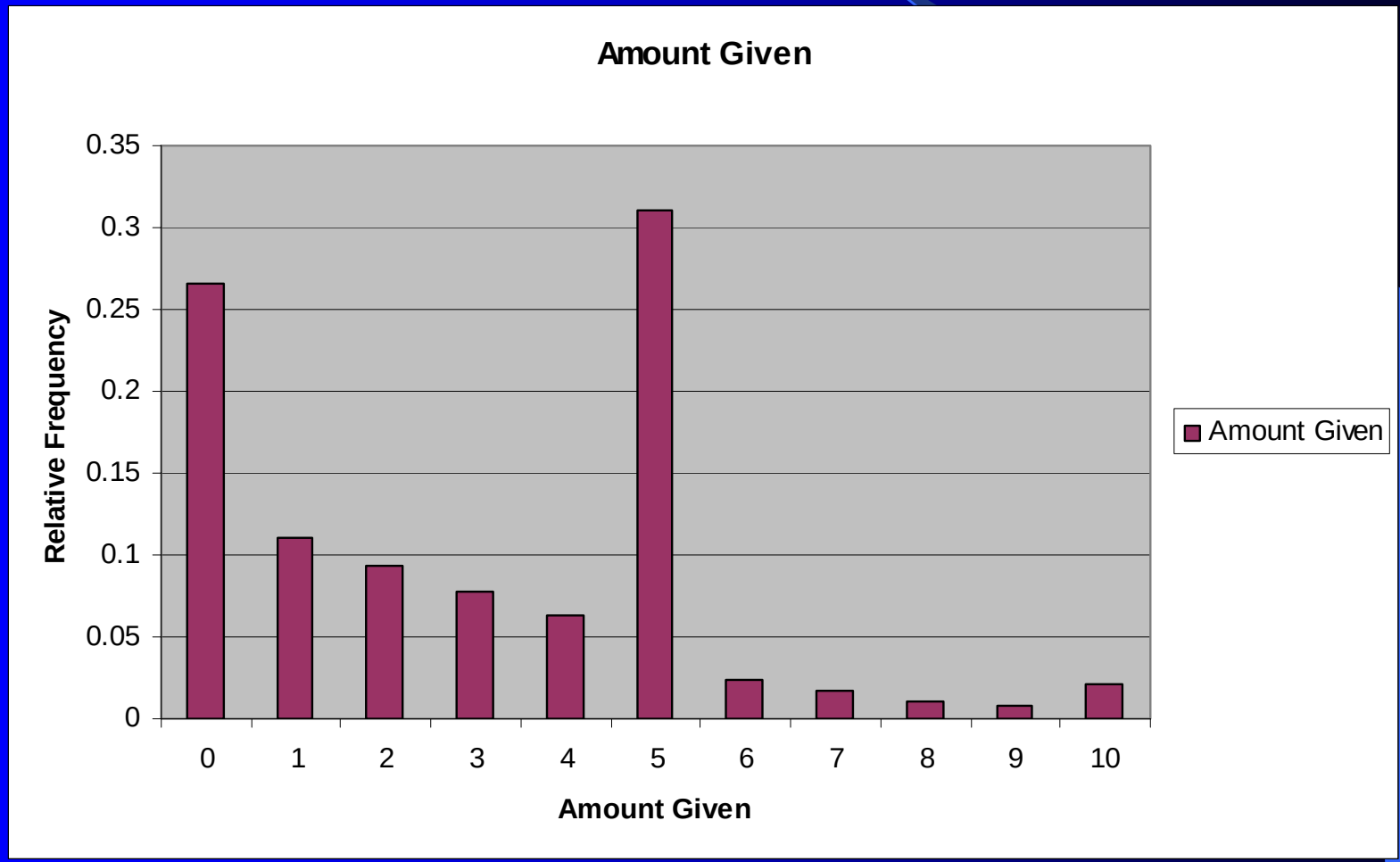
Experiments

- 164 Dictators
  - 98 Males/64 Females/2 failed to report
  - 105 Caucasian/23 African American/19 Asian/17 other or failed to report
  - Paid for their share of $10 from 1 decision
  - Paid a $2 show up fee
  - Data from 4 calibrated names reported – no attempt made to calibrate name of “real” partner

Experiments (Continued)

- 134 Recipients
  - 89 Males/45 Females
  - 102 Caucasian, 11 African American, 16 Asian, 5 other or failed to report
  - Paid a $3 show up fee
  - Amount dictator allocated
  - $1 from each correct guess of dictator's allocation to 4 others' names

Histogram of Amount Given



Averages by Gender

Dictator\Recipient	Male	Female	Average To All
Male	2.73	3.00	2.871
Female	2.99	3.16	3.075
Average From All	2.88	3.07	2.97

Results

- Women give more than men (at 10% level)

Averages by Ethnicity

Receiver / Dictator	African-American	Arabic	Asian	Caucasian	Hispanic	Average To All
African-American	4.42	3.70	4.15	3.63	3.09	3.75
Asian	2.50	3.25	3.29	3.14	3.22	3.10
Caucasian	2.33	2.81	2.30	2.82	2.91	2.71
Other	1.80	3.00	4.25	3.25	5.33	3.31
Average From All	2.61	3.00	2.91	3.02	3.14	2.97

Results

- African American names receive less than average
- African American people give more than average
- Arabic names do not receive less than average

Other results on Ethnicity & Gender (Amount Received)

	Male	Female	Overall
African-American	2.66	2.57	2.61
Arabic	3.23	2.74	3.00
Asian	2.23	3.58	2.91
Caucasian	3.05	3.00	3.02
Hispanic	2.60	3.63	3.14
Overall	2.88	3.06	2.97

- Interactions based on gender/ethnicity of dictator
  - Dictators give more money to Hispanic and Asian women than to Caucasian women
- Hypothesis: "J-Lo effect"
  - Men want to be with her, women want to be like her
- Arabic men receive more than women

Results on Guesses

- Positively related to amount received
  - "If I get more, I expect that you get more"
- Men & Asians expect dictators to give more
- Guess African Americans receive less by $1
  - Actually receive $0.40 less
- Guessers do not predict "J-Lo Effect"

What is your Household Income relative to other Students at VT?

Income	Average given
Significantly Higher	2.44
Higher	2.61
About the same	3.00
Somewhat Below	3.30
Significantly Below	3.59

- People who earn more give less
- Guesses not affected by family earnings

Conclusions

- Developed a technique for measuring discrimination on a college campus
- Differences found in treatment of ethnic groups
  - African American names given less
  - Arabic male names NOT given less but women are?
  - Asian and Hispanic women given more
- Persons who report lower household income give away more
- Do not claim that results generalize beyond Virginia Tech, a rural school in SW Virginia