

IAREP/SABE/ICABEEP 2010 Conference in Cologne

The IAREP/SABE/ICABEEP Conference 2010 in Cologne was organized by the Department of Economic and Social Psychology. For our department it was a great pleasure and honor to host the joint conference of two major scientific organizations in the intersection of psychology and economics. Both IAREP (International Association for Research in Economic Psychology) and SABE (Society for the Advancement of Behavioral Economics) bring together researchers from different backgrounds who are interested in an interdisciplinary approach to human behavior in economic contexts. This joint interest has recently resulted in a federation named ICABEEP (International Confederation for the Advancement of Behavioral Economics and Economic Psychology) whose goal is to further increase cooperation between the two organizations. This goal fits perfectly into our understanding of interdisciplinary research and was therefore an ideal guideline to follow when planning and hosting the IAREP/SABE/ICABEEP Conference 2010. Looking back one can say that the conference was not just a great experience for us and our department but also a huge success. A total of 229 first authors from all over the world and four famous keynote speakers shared their state-of-the-art scientific research with more than 350 international participants. They covered a variety of topics such as individual and group decision making, social dilemmas, intertemporal choice, game-theoretical analyses, investment, tax behavior, and energy-saving. In addition a number of contributions were on happiness, well-being, and life satisfaction or focused

on methodological issues.

Most authors presented their findings in talk sessions or the poster session. In addition to these usual forms of contribution, we offered a new session setting: The round table discussion with the goal to generate fruitful discussions about completed or planned empirical, conceptual or methodical research projects. The session lasted 90 minutes and had different tables each with a certain topic such as for example social norms, stress and work satisfaction, preferences and choice, antisocial behavior, or entrepreneurs. At each table there were five researchers who had 15 – 20 minutes to introduce their work or ideas and to discuss it with the other group members and participants who could join tables of their interest.

The keynote talks were given by two economists, Robert Frank and Axel Ockenfels, and two psychologists, Dave Dunning and Thomas Mussweiler. Robert Frank (Cornell University, USA) stated in his talk about “The Libertarian Welfare State” that although many of the shortcomings that progressives have identified in our economic and political system are real, they are often wrong about the causes of those shortcomings, and often wrong, therefore, about how best to counteract them. He also discussed boundaries of the libertarian position. Axel Ockenfels (University of Cologne, Germany) spoke about “Economic and cognitive engineering of social interaction” and argued that the degree of perceived similarity strengthens altruistic and reciprocal behavior in simple trust and dilemma games with punishment. In his talk on “Trust in Others: Its Emotional, Social, rather than its Economic, Underpinnings”, Dave Dunning (Cornell University,

USA) pointed out the emotional and social in nature of trust and the important role of relationships to promote trust. Talking “On Envy, Trust and Sloths – How Comparative Thinking Shapes Economic Decision Making” Thomas Mussweiler (University of Cologne, Germany) introduced the idea that comparative thinking holds efficiency advantages caused by two core mechanisms, namely information focus and information transfer. Furthermore he highlighted how comparative thinking influences economic decision making, presenting envy and trust as two prominent cases in point. Another highlight was the panel discussion of Gerrit Antonides, Ofer Azar, David Dunning, Robert Frank, Stephen Lea, and Folke Olander moderated by Detlef Fetchenhauer. Entitled with “Economic Psychology and Behavioral Economics – Monocytotic twins or mere siblings?” the panel discussed about the positive, but also on the negative aspects of a strong cooperation between economic psychology and behavioral economics.