Matthew Cashman

Houlden Postdoctoral Fellow, WBS Behavioural Science Group

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Citizenship	United States, Italy			

Education

2023	**Ph.D.**	**MIT Sloan**	**Cambridge, MA**
		Committee: Drazen Prelec (chair), Rahul Bhui, Dave Rand	
2008	**A.B.**	**Hamilton College**	**Clinton, NY**
		Chemistry & Philosophy	

Employment

2023 –	**Univ. of Warwick**	**Fellow**	**Warwick, UK**
		Houlden Postdoctoral Fellow	
2021 –	**Harvard**	**Associate**	**Cambridge, MA**
		Culture, Cognition, Coevolution Lab Prof. Joe Henrich	
2015–2017	**Harvard**	**Lab Manager**	**Cambridge, MA**
		Moral Psychology Research Lab Prof. Fiery Cushman	
2010–2015	**L.E.K. Consulting**	**Consultant**	**Boston, MA**
		Strategy and due diligence for private equity and corporate clients	
2010	**Chungdahm**	**English Teacher**	**Seoul, SK**
2008–2009	**Eze Castle Software**	**Analyst**	**Boston, MA**
		Software for hedge funds	

Awards

2021	Harvard Kennedy School Program on Negotiation Next-Generation Grant	$5,000
2019	Harvard Dean's Competitive fund *PI: Prof. Fiery Cushman*	$34,000
2006–08	Henry B. Watkins Scholarship for First-Generation College Students	$48,000

Cashman, M. P. & Cushman, F. A. (2020). Learning from Moral Failure. In Schwenkler, John & Lambert, Enoch (eds.) *Becoming Someone New: Essays on Transformative Experience, Choice, and Change*. Oxford University Press.

> Pedagogical environments are often designed to minimize the chance of people acting wrongly; surely this is a sensible approach. But could it ever be useful to design pedagogical environments to permit, or even encourage, moral failure? We consider the possibility that moral failure can be an especially effective tool in fostering learning, and the costs involved. We conclude by suggesting research directions that would help to establish whether, when and how moral pedagogy might be facilitated by letting students learn from moral failure.

Cao, C., Cao, X., **Cashman, M.** *et al.* How do successful scholars get their best research ideas? An exploration. *Mark Lett* 30, 221–232 (2019).

> We interview 24 authors to ask how they got the ideas for 64 of their papers. More than three quarters of the papers were inspired by holes in the literature, by a "stylized fact" that the current literature cannot explain, or by an interaction with a manager. The rest fall into several smaller categories that to a large extent can be seen as special cases of the three big ones. We describe how papers from each of the three big categories help move the literature forward.

[UNDER REVIEW] **Cashman, M.** & Prelec, D. 2023. *Acting* as if *drives cooperation among the purely self-interested*

> We provide experimental evidence for a psychological mechanism that explains cooperation even among the self-interested: acting *as if*. In one-shot Public Goods Games where players move one after another but do not observe others' moves, payoff-maximizing players act as if others will choose to make the same move they have. Contributions to the public good are highest at the beginning and decline as order increases—but only among payoff-maximizers. Players act as if their moves will influence others even though they know there is no causal linkage.

Cashman, M. 2022. *An information theoretic measure of cultural success.*

> I develop a principled, content-agnostic measure of culturally-transmitted information that is stored in a mind: Retained Novel Information, or RNI. Using cloze completion tasks I estimate entropy (bits per character or word) with a treatment group (those that have been exposed to a target work) and a control group (those who have not been exposed) and take a difference measure to give RNI. This quantity represents the information from the target work that is actually stored in the reader's mind and which is, therefore, capable of influencing behavior. This technique can be used to measure information as it flows through populations among many other applications.

[R&R *J.LEO*] **Cashman, M.**, Maciejovsky,B. , Wernerfelt, B. 2023. *Small talk as a contracting device: trust, cooperative norms, and changing equilibria.*

> We show experimentally that even very brief small talk with a potential trading partner may function as contracting device by enhancing trust and cooperation. In contrast to formal contracts, pre-deal socializing can cover contingencies that are truly unforeseen, and unlike relational contracts, it is independent of repeated play. A second set of experiments show that between-stage socializing in repeated games can help players move from one stage-game equilibrium to another.

[R&R *Science*] Voelkel, J.G., Stagnaro, M.N., Chu, J., Pink, S., Mernyk, J.S., Redekopp, C., **Cashman, M.,** Qualifying Strengthening Democracy Challenge Submitters, Druckman, J.N., Rand, D.G., Willer, R. 2022.
Megastudy identifying successful interventions to strengthen Americans' democratic attitudes.

> The Strengthening Democracy Challenge, an N= 32,059 study, finds that 23 of 25 interventions designed to reduce anti-democratic attitudes and partisan animosity are effective. These interventions are also effective in reducing support for undemocratic practices and partisan violence, among a variety of other secondary outcomes.

INVITED TALKS	2024	UPF Center for Brain and Cognition	
	2024	MIT BCS Cog Lunch	
	2023	Konstanz Social Norms Workshop	
	2023	Warwick Modeling Group	
	2023	University of Warwick Psychology	
	2023	WBS Behavioural Science Lab	
	2021	Culture, Cognition, and Co-ev. Lab	PI: Joe Henrich
	2020	Human Cooperation Lab	PI: Dave Rand
	2020	MIT Sloan Marketing Seminar	
	2019	Culture, Cognition, and Co-ev. Lab	PI: Joe Henrich
	2019	Human Dynamics Lab	PI: Sandy Pentland
	2019	MIT Neuroeconomics Lab	PI: Drazen Prelec
	2017	Moral Psychology Research Lab	PI: Fiery Cushman
	2016	Moral Psychology Research Lab	PI: Fiery Cushman

CONFERENCE TALKS	2024	Cognitive Science of Culture	Talk
	2024	Winter AMA	Talk
	2023	SJDM	Poster
	2023	SPUDM	Short talk
	2023	IAREP-SABE	Talk
	2021	SJDM	Poster
	2021	Int'l Conference on Thinking	Talk
	2021	Max Planck Summer Institute	Short talk
	2020	Cogsci	Poster
	2019	Human Behavior and Evolution Society	Talk
	2019	Boston JDM Conference	Talk

TEACHING	2024	Economics of Wellbeing	WBS
	2023	Data-Driven Decision Making	WBS
	2020	TA, Psychology and Economics *Prof. Drazen Prelec*	MIT Economics
	2020, 23	TA, Applied Behavioral Economics *Prof. Drazen Prelec*	MIT Sloan

	2010	Instructor, Chungdahm Institute	Seoul, South Korea
		Full-time English teacher for 11-17 y.o.	

SERVICE

2023	Ad hoc reviewer	Experimental Economics
2020–23	Advisory board member	MIT Open Publishing
2019	Ad hoc reviewer	Emotion
2016	MPRG meeting planning	Harvard Psychology

VOLUNTEER

2016–18 MAPS Public Benefit Corporation
Consulting work for a non-profit pharmaceutical company developing a novel treatment for PTSD

2013–15 Fellow, MIT Center for Collective Intelligence
Managed Climate CoLab teams as part of research on crowdsourcing

COURSEWORK

Selected substantive courses

Consumer Behavior Seminar	*Drazen Prelec*
Computational Intelligence	*Tomaso Poggio, Shimon Ullman*
Game Theory as applied to Social Behavior	*Erez Yoeli, Moshe Hoffman*
Developmental Psychology Proseminar	*Susan Carey*
Cognitive Science	*Pawan Sinha, Josh Tenenbaum, Ted Gibson*
Vision in Art and Neuroscience	*P.Sinha, S. Schwettmann, S. Riskin*
Psychology and Economics	*Drazen Prelec*
Computational Cognitive Science	*Josh Tenenbaum*
Theories of Learning	*Sam Gershman*
Human Nature	*Joe Henrich, Richard Wrangham*

Selected methods courses

Experimental Design & Analysis	*Dean Eckles*
Measurement Issues	*John Hauser*
Research Design	*Dean Eckles*
Statistical Modeling	*Kevin Rader*
Data Science and Statistical Learning with R	*A. Sivachenko, V. Farutin*

SKILLS

Linux user day-to-day, Bash & Python for general scripting use
Python + NumPy + pandas for statistics and data analysis
oTree / Django for stimuli, real-time video interaction tasks

REFERENCES

Drazen Prelec
Digital Equipment Corp LGO Professor of Management MIT Sloan;
Department of Economics; Department of Brain & Cognitive Sciences
dprelec@mit.edu

Dave Rand
Erwin H. Schell Professor and Professor of Management Science MIT Sloan;
Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences
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Birger Wernerfelt
J.C. Penney Professor of Management; Professor of Marketing MIT Sloan
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Joe Henrich
Ruth Moore Professor of Biological Anthropology in the Department of
Human Evolutionary Biology at Harvard University
henrich@fas.harvard.edu