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The research of me and my graduate students focuses on the following issues:

- 1) **Determinants of prosocial and antisocial behavior.** Humans jump into ice-cold rivers to rescue strangers from drowning or donate money to victims of natural catastrophes happening thousands of miles away. But, sometimes humans are willing to discriminate or even to kill other humans, only because they have a different skin-color or worship another god as they themselves. In our research we try to answer the question, which situational and personal variables determine, whether humans act prosocial, fair and peaceful or rather antisocial, selfish and aggressive. Specifically, we investigate the influence of personality dimensions (especially the concept of justice sensitivity) on human prosocial and antisocial behavior. Besides, we study, whether humans are able to identify each other's level of altruism. Another line of research – in cooperation with Dave Dunning (Cornell University) – explores determinants of interpersonal trust.
- 2) **How laypeople perceive the economy.** In the last years economic experts have time and again argued that the economic system and the welfare state in Germany needs to be changed. However, our research shows that experts and laypeople differ quite a lot in their perspectives on how the German system should be reformed. To explain these differences we investigate which subjective economic theories laypeople hold and to which degree these lay-theories are influenced by different heuristics and biases. Moreover, we study the role that the perceived fairness of economic reform measures plays for their acceptance.
- 3) **Evolutionary Psychology.** In recent years the new paradigm of evolutionary psychology has become more and more important. Evolutionary psychology argues that human behavior is not only governed by our current social environments, but also by our evolutionary past. This is in stark contrast to many theories in the mainstream of the social sciences. In our group we strive to integrate both camps by aiming at a real integration of both camps. We aim to show that human behavior can only be understood as a complex interaction of our current conditions *and* our genetic predispositions. More specifically, we investigate the development and explanation of human altruism and of humans' propensity to believe in supernatural entities (e.g., to believe in gods). In another line of research we focus on automatic and intuitive processes in the domain of person perception.