

## **PhD Studentships for Academic Year 2026-27**

### **Centre for Experimental Methods and Behavioural Research (EMBR)**

#### **About the Research Centre**

The Centre for Experimental Methods and Behavioural Research (EMBR) is a community and platform for researchers who are interested in examining human behaviour and underlying decision processes.

Behavioural research is an umbrella term used to describe research in the social and behavioural sciences that deals with human behaviour in real-world settings. It aims to examine and understand individual and social behaviour through measurement and interpretation. The use of laboratory, field and survey experiments to understand human behaviour has grown into a respected and well-established methodology in many fields.

Find out more at: [Centre for Experimental Methods and Behavioural Research - Durham University Business School](#)

#### **Topic 1**

##### **Title of Proposed Research Topic:**

Migration and Trust: Evidence on Assimilation from Internal Migrants

##### **Potential Supervisors:**

[Dr Diego Marino Fages](#)

##### **Description of Possible Research Topic:**

I'm interested in supervising PhD students in the fields of culture, social preferences, religion, political economy, etc. In terms of methodology, I use applied econometrics and experimental methods (field, online and lab).

##### **Key References:**

[EMBR Publications](#)

## Topic 2

### **Title of Proposed Research Topic:**

Migration and Social Preferences

### **Potential Supervisors:**

[Dr Diego Marino Fages](#)

### **Description of Possible Research Topic:**

I'm interested in supervising PhD students in the fields of culture, social preferences, religion, political economy, etc. In terms of methodology, I use applied econometrics and experimental methods (field, online and lab).

### **Key References:**

[EMBR Publications](#)

## Topic 3

### **Title of Proposed Research Topic:**

Using the Strategy Method and Elicited Beliefs to Explain Group Size and MPCR Effects in Public Good Experiments

### **Potential Supervisors:**

[Dr Diego Marino Fages](#)

### **Description of Possible Research Topic:**

I'm interested in supervising PhD students in the fields of culture, social preferences, religion, political economy, etc. In terms of methodology, I use applied econometrics and experimental methods (field, online and lab).

### **Key References:**

[EMBR Publications](#)

## Topic 4

### Title of Proposed Research Topic:

Economic Development, Cultural Economics, and Political Economy

### Potential Supervisors:

[Dr Eren Arbatli](#)

### Description of Possible Research Topic:

I'm interested in supervising PhD students in the fields of long-run economic development, cultural economics, and political economy. I'd be happy to talk to candidates willing to study historical roots of economic prosperity or investigate historical factors that shaped the evolution of political preferences and cultural traits. In my political economy research, I study various aspects of electoral politics, media bias, social movements, and political violence. I am happy to supervise students who want to work on any related political economy topic as well.

Recently I have been studying geographic origins of diversity in cultural values, historical factors that left a legacy on attitudes towards homosexuals, how womens' norms about (tolerance towards) intimate partner violence are shaped by husband characteristics. Finally, one ongoing research (joint with Diego Marino Fages) is about exposure segregation. We aim to investigate both the factors that shape segregation and its implications on various outcomes of interest. Key causes to be examined empirically include the availability of public spaces that facilitate inter-group interactions and random encounters. Potential consequences under analysis include changes in inter-group attitudes, levels of trust, and preferences for redistribution. Additionally, this framework allows for the exploration of other causes and effects that may emerge from the study of group segregation. Among the potential countries one can study are the US and United Kingdom.

### Key References:

Arbatli, C. E., & Gokmen, G. (2023). Human Capital Transfers and Sub-national Development: Armenian and Greek Legacy in Post-expulsion Turkey. *Journal of Economic Growth*, 28(1), 1-43. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10887-022-09210-8>

Shchukin, V., & Arbatli, C. E. (2022). Clientelism and Development: Vote-buying Meets Patronage. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 34(1), 3-34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09516298211061515>

Arbatli, C. E., & Gomtsyan, D. (2021). Sectarian Aid, Sanctions and Subnational Development. *European Economic Review*, 139. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2021.103891>

Arbatli, C. E., Ashraf, Q. H., Galor, O., & Klemp, M. (2020). Diversity and Conflict. *Econometrica*, 88(2), 727-797. <https://doi.org/10.3982/ecta13734>

Arbatli, C. E., & Gomtsyan, D. (2019). Voting Retrospectively: Critical Junctures and Party Identification. *European Economic Review*, 119, 356-390. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2019.08.005>

## Topic 5

### **Title of Proposed Research Topic:**

Applied Economics

### **Potential Supervisors:**

[Dr Demid Getik](#)

### **Description of Possible Research Topic:**

I'd be happy to supervise PhD students interested broadly in the following topics in applied economics: education, mental health, substance policy, the economics of religion, gender and segregation in the labour market, marriage/mate selection economics.

### **Key References:**

[EMBR Publications](#)

## Topic 6

### **Title of Proposed Research Topic:**

Institutions

### **Potential Supervisors:**

[Dr Aleksei Chernulich](#)

[Dr Andis Sofianos](#)

### **Description of Possible Research Topic:**

The market design allows developing institutions that theoretically achieve desirable properties (such as, for example, efficiency or fairness), yet the actual performance

of these institutions is the ultimate test of designed institutions. Research topics are centred around laboratory tests of various institutions, such as, for example, auctions.

### **Key References:**

Bedard, N. C., Goeree, J. K., Louis, P., & Zhang, J. (2024). Sealed-bid Versus Ascending Spectrum Auctions. *Experimental Economics*, 27(2), 299-324. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10683-023-09805-x>

Klemperer, P. (2001). How (Not) to Run Auctions: The European 3G Telecom Auctions. *European Economic Review*, 46, 829-845. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0014-2921\(01\)00218-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0014-2921(01)00218-5)

Roth, A. E. (2002). The Economist as Engineer: Game Theory, Experimentation, and Computation as Tools for Design Economics. *Econometrica*, 70(4), 1341-1378. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0262.00335>

## **Topic 7**

### **Title of Proposed Research Topic:**

Causes and Consequences of Group Segregation

### **Potential Supervisors:**

[Dr Eren Arbatli](#)

[Dr Diego Marino Fages](#)

### **Description of Possible Research Topic:**

We would like to supervise a student interested in applied work with large datasets related to segregation/mobility in the United States and how they are shaped by other factors or how they affect other outcomes of interest.

### **Key References:**

[EMBR Publications](#)

## **Topic 8**

### **Title of Proposed Research Topic:**

## Measurement and Modelling of Risk, Time, and Ambiguity Preferences

### Potential Supervisors:

[Professor Morten Lau](#)

### Description of Possible Research Topic:

I welcome PhD proposals in behavioural and experimental economics, with particular emphasis on the measurement and modelling of risk, time, and ambiguity preferences using incentivised field and laboratory experiments. Topics may include the temporal stability of individual preferences, structural estimation of higher-order risk attitudes, behavioural responses to uncertainty in health, gambling, and insurance contexts, and the integration of administrative or longitudinal data with experimental measures to study economic behaviour. I am also interested in supervising projects that explore social trust, intertemporal decision-making, and behavioural heterogeneity in applied policy domains, including welfare, health, and financial decision-making. Projects combining experimental design, behavioural econometrics, and real-world data environments are especially encouraged.

### Key References:

[EMBR Publications](#)

## Topic 9

### Title of Proposed Research Topic:

Behavioural Game Theory, Social Preferences, Group Identity, or Individual Decision Making

### Potential Supervisors:

[Dr Jinrui Pan](#)

### Description of Possible Research Topic:

I'm interested in supervising PhD students in the fields of behavioural game theory, social preferences, group identity, individual decision making over time and under risk. In terms of methodology, I am interested in applied econometrics and experimental methods (field, online and lab).

### Key References:

[EMBR Publications](#)

## Topic 10

### **Title of Proposed Research Topic:**

Economics of Sports

### **Potential Supervisors:**

[Dr Aleksei Chernulich](#)

### **Description of Possible Research Topic:**

Topics related to the economics of sports.

### **Key References:**

Walker, M., & Wooders, J. (2001). Minimax Play at Wimbledon. *American Economic Review*, 91(5), 1521–1538. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.91.5.1521>

Gauriot, R., Page, L., & Wooders, J. (2023). Expertise, Gender, and Equilibrium Play. *Quantitative Economics*, 14(3), 981-1020. <https://doi.org/10.3982/QE1563>