



## Sebastiano Munini

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### ABOUT ME

I am an early-career behavioural scientist aiming to apply evidence-based insights to promote cooperation and support long-term social and environmental sustainability. Currently, I am a first-year PhD student in Cognitive Psychology and a research fellow at the Institute of Cognitive Sciences and Technologies (ISTC-CNR). My work investigates the cognitive and motivational mechanisms that drive cooperative behavior in social dilemmas, especially the areas of environmental sustainability and healthcare. Through experiments conducted online and in real-world settings, I examine how social and moral norms, trust, perceived cooperation, and social visibility shape prosocial decision-making. These studies contribute to theoretical models of human cooperation and support the development of behavioural interventions such as nudges and boosts, with practical relevance for public policy and collective well-being.

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

#### PhD in Psychology and Cognitive Science

**Sapienza University of Rome** [ 10/2024 – Current ]

City: Rome | Country: Italy

- **Supervisor:** Prof. Fabio Paglieri; **Co-tutor:** Prof. Fabio Ferlazzo
- **Focus:** experimental research on norm-nudging interventions, investigating how social and moral norms shape cooperative and prosocial behaviour across domains

#### MSc in Applied Cognitive Psychology Oct 2020–Apr 2023

**University of Padua** [ 10/2020 – 04/2023 ]

City: Padua | Country: Italy

- **Final grade:** 110/110
- **Thesis:** "Framing in Charitable Giving: How perceived costs and benefits influence donations"
- **Thesis Supervisor:** Prof. Enrico Rubaltelli

#### Erasmus Exchange Programme

**Radboud University** [ 08/2018 – 02/2019 ]

City: Nijmegen | Country: Netherlands

#### BSc in Psychology and Social Processes

**Sapienza University of Rome** [ 10/2016 – 09/2020 ]

City: Rome | Country: Italy

- **Final grade:** 108/110
- **Student Representative** in the Department Assembly (2018/2020)

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### **Institute of Cognitive Sciences and Technologies (ISTC-CNR) – Rome, Italy**

City: Rome | Country: Italy

#### **Research Fellow, JADE Lab (Judgment, Argumentation and Decision-Making Lab)**

[ 01/2024 – Current ]

- **Participated** in the **design** and **execution** of **9 studies** (8 experiments, 1 meta-analysis) on topics including norm nudging, framing effects, public goods, social exclusion, trust, and altruism in early childhood
- **Co-authored 9 related articles** (1 published, 2 under review, 6 in progress), contributing to **6 introductions, 5 discussions, 2 methods sections**, and multiple **reviewer responses**
- Designed and **implemented** online studies on "**Qualtrics**", **managed** participant recruitment and **data collection** via "**Prolific**", and **assisted** with **data processing** and statistical **analysis** using "**R**"
- **Prepared** and submitted **ethics approval applications** for 2 studies
- Contributed to multiple national (PRIN) and European (Horizon) projects (PERYCLES, COOPDEV, B-Hu-Well, ICRAS) (see **Projects section** for details).
- **Produced** periodic **progress reports** for the **ICRAS** project (see below), detailing activities and outcomes for funder evaluation
- **Presented** research at **AISC 2023** and **ICT 2024**
- **Delivered** a **seminar** on **green nudges and climate action** at Roma Tre University
- Additional roles:
  - **Peer reviewer** for the journal *Sistemi Intelligenti*
  - **Lead organizer** and **editor** for a forthcoming *Mind & Society* **special issue** on behavioral intervention
  - Member of the **organizing committee** for the B-Hu-Well final **conference** (October 2025)

### **Institute of Cognitive Sciences and Technologies (ISTC-CNR) – Rome, Italy**

City: Rome | Country: Italy

#### **Research Intern, T3 Trust Group (Trust Theory and Technology)**

[ 09/2023 – 03/2024 ]

- **Received mentoring** in theories of **trust** and **cooperation** (supervised by Prof. Cristiano Castelfranchi)
- **Presented master's thesis** work on **charitable giving** during an internal seminar at the institute (**ISTC-CNR**)
- **Developed** and presented a behavioral **experiment proposal** on waste sorting **for** project **COOPDEV**, later accepted at the official kick-off meeting
- **Drafted** the **introduction** for a paper on the **attraction effect** and **co-authored** the **introduction and discussion** of an experimental study using the **Cyberball paradigm**
- Participated in the 2023 **AISC Conference**, presenting results from the Cyberball experiment

### **Sapienza University of Rome – Rome, Italy**

City: Rome | Country: Italy

#### **Scientific Visitor, Laboratory of Cognitive Ergonomics**

[ 05/2023 – 08/2023 ]

- **Received mentoring** in **experimental methodology** and critical analysis of literature on decision-making processes (supervised by Prof. Fabio Ferlazzo)
- **Assisted** in **cleaning** and **analyzing** large **behavioral datasets** from a Markov Decision Task

### **University of Padua – Padua, Italy**

City: Padua | Country: Italy

#### **Research Intern, Department of Developmental Psychology and Socialization (DPSS)**

[ 05/2022 – 09/2022 ]

- **Reviewed** interdisciplinary literature on **altruism** and **cooperation** from evolutionary, economic, and psychological perspectives, as well as key studies on **heuristics**, **framing effects**, and **cognitive biases** in charitable giving (supervised by Prof. Enrico Rubaltelli)

- **Designed** an **experiment** to test how **linguistic framing** (valence and reference point) influences perceived costs and benefits in **donation decisions**
- **Programmed** and **administered** the study on "**Qualtrics**"; **collected** and **cleaned data** from approximately **400 participants**
- **Performed** statistical **analyses** in "**R**", using logistic regression models to assess the impact of framing on donation behaviour

## PROJECTS

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### COOPDEV - Cooperation Nudges for Sustainable Development (PRIN 2022 · 24 months)

- **Focus:** experimental identification and testing of behavioural nudges and strategies that promote cooperation in large-scale environmental dilemmas.
- **Contribution:** designed and executed a full experimental study on waste sorting behaviour (first author); managed most phases of the study, including experimental design, ethical review, "Qualtrics" implementation, and data collection; presented preliminary findings at ICT 2024; ongoing manuscript preparation.

### B-Hu-Well - Boosting Human Well-Being with Behavioural Insights (PRIN PNRR 2022 · 24 months)

- **Focus:** develop "boost" interventions to enhance health-related decision making, cooperation, and patient-clinician communication.
- **Contribution:** contributed to the design of an ongoing experiment on how people evaluate medical information (accuracy vs. truthlikeness); currently preparing experimental stimuli and implementing the study on "Qualtrics".

### ICRAS - Interventions for Community Resilience to Environmental & Health Risks (National grant)

- **Focus:** theoretical modeling, behavioral experiments, and agent-based simulations aimed at enhancing community resilience through behavioral interventions.
- **Contribution:** participated in study design discussions; conducted a literature review on transparency and perceived fairness in public investment in collective healthcare resources; implemented experimental paradigms on "Qualtrics"; supported data management and preliminary analysis; drafted project deliverables and reporting documents.

### PERYCLES - Participatory dEmocRacY that sCaLES (Horizon Europe · 36 months)

- **Focus:** design and deployment of open-source digital deliberation platforms for inclusive and scalable citizen participation.
- **Contributions:** represented JADE Lab at the project's kick-off meeting; proposed experimental designs on how social information may influence voting behavior on participatory platforms.

## PUBLICATIONS

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[\(Published\) Munini, S., Paglieri, F., Sapienza, A., Negri, M., & Marini, M. \(2024\). Picking Your Friends is a Risky Business: Psychological Impacts of Social Exclusion and Teammates Selection in a Cyberball Game with Middle School Students. Youth & Society](#)

[\(Pre-print\) Marini, M., Munini, S., Paravani, S., & Paglieri, F. \(2025\). Ordered to attract: The Dynamics of Attraction Effect in Simultaneous and Sequential Value-based Choice Tasks. Submitted to "Journal of Behavioral Decision Making"](#)

(Under review) Marini M., Munini S., Carlino M., Paglieri F. The little dictator: Understanding altruism in young children. Submitted to "Evolution and Human Behaviour"

(In progress) Munini S., Paglieri F., Ansani A., Marini M. Promoting Waste Sorting with Moral and Social Nudges: The Influence of Perceived Cooperation

(In progress) Marini M., Gerna A., Munini S., Carlino M., Lunetti C., Paglieri F. What boys won't give girls will take: How Gender Shapes Prosocial Behavior in Preschoolers'

(In progress) Marini M., Munini S., Sapienza A., Gerna A., Falcone R., Paglieri F. Cooperation Only Works in the Spotlight Evidence from a Public Health Resource Dilemma

(In progress) Coraci P., Marini M., Munini S., Paglieri F., Cevolani G. Truthlikeness and accuracy in medical decision making: cognitive biases and communicative challenges.

(In progress) Vecchi A., Marini M., Munini S., Gerna A., Paglieri F. Perspective-taking in literary reading: How voice and focalization shape identification with fictional characters.

(In progress) Munini S., Tacconelli A., Capraro V. ... Norm-nudges: Toward an Operational Definition and Meta-Analytic Synthesis

## CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

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[ 10/04/2025 ] Roma Tre University (Rome)

### **Green nudges: the role of behavioural incentives in tackling the climate crisis**

Delivered seminar "Green nudges: the role of behavioural incentives in tackling the climate crisis" as part of the S.I.BIL. (Seminario Interdisciplinare Bilaterale) series- a collaborative initiative between ISTC-CNR and Roma Tre University

[ 18/09/2024 ] Sapienza University of Rome, Rome

### **AISC 2024 (Italian Association of Cognitive Sciences)**

Presented full findings of "Promoting Waste Sorting with Moral and Social Nudges: The Influence of Perceived Cooperation"

Link: <https://aisc2024.istc.cnr.it/>

[ 28/06/2024 ] Villa del Grumello, Como

### **Third Lake Como Summer School in Philosophy of Economics**

Presented and debated my project "*Moral and Social Nudges for Promoting Cooperation in Wicked Social Dilemmas*" with students and faculty

[ 10/06/2024 ] University of Milano Bicocca, Milan

### **ICT 2024 (International Conference of Thinking)**

Presented preliminary findings of "Promoting Waste Sorting with Moral and Social Nudges: The Influence of Perceived Cooperation"

Link: <https://ict2024.com/>

[ 08/03/2024 ]

### **Presented an experiment proposal at B-Hu-Well kick-off meeting**

Partners: ISTC-CNR, University of Trento CIMEC, Milano Cattolica University

[ 15/12/2023 ] University of Genova, Genova

### **AISC 2023 (Italian Association of Cognitive Sciences)**

Presented "Picking your friends is a risky business: Emotional impacts of social exclusion and player choice in a cyberball game with middle school students"

[ 17/11/2023 ]

### **Presented an experiment proposal at COOPDEV kick-off meeting**

Partners: ISTC-CNR, Milano Cattolica University, Milano Bicocca University

[ 09/10/2023 ] Institute of cognitive sciences and technologies (ISTC-CNR), Rome

### **Framing in Charitable Giving: How perceived costs and benefits influence donations**

Presented the master's thesis "Framing in Charitable Giving: How perceived costs and benefits influence donations" at ISTC-CNR research groups

## **CERTIFICATES AND ACTIVITIES**

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[ 05/2023 ]

### **Yale University , "Financial Markets"- 8 weeks online course**

○ Introduction to risk management and behavioural finance principles

[ 04/2022 ]

### **University of Padova, "Formazione generale dei lavoratori per la salute e la sicurezza nei luoghi di lavoro"**

[ 23/06/2024 – 28/06/2024 ]

### **Third Lake Como Summer School in Philosophy of Economics**

○ **Attended** faculty **lectures** and student **presentations**, joining international **discussions** on the philosophy, methodology, and history of economics

○ Engaged in **one-to-one tutorials** with Chiara Lisciandra (Utrecht University) for in-depth analysis, **feedback**, and restructuring of my research **article**

○ **Presented** and **debated my project** "*Moral and Social Nudges for Promoting Cooperation in Wicked Social Dilemmas*" with students and faculty

Link: <https://ebmp2024.lakecomoschool.org/>

## **TECHNICAL SKILLS**

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### **R and RStudio (Advanced):**

data cleaning, manipulation, and visualization; statistical analyses including t-tests, ANOVA, linear regression, logistic regression, Kruskal-Wallis, generalized linear models, and mixed-effects models; assumption checking (normality, reliability with Cronbach's alpha); data visualization with ggplot2.

### **Jamovi (Advanced):**

performing the same range of analyses as in R; used for complementary statistical analyses and visualization.

### **Qualtrics (Advanced):**

design and implementation of complex experimental paradigms across multiple research projects; advanced survey logic, randomization, and data export.

### **Reference management:**

Zotero and Mendeley.

### **Other tools:**

G\*Power (power analysis); Excel (basic data cleaning and management).

## LANGUAGE SKILLS

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**Mother tongue(s):** Italian

**Other language(s):**

### English

**LISTENING** C2 **READING** C2 **WRITING** C2

**SPOKEN PRODUCTION** C2 **SPOKEN INTERACTION** C2

### French

**LISTENING** B1 **READING** B1 **WRITING** A1

**SPOKEN PRODUCTION** A1 **SPOKEN INTERACTION** A1

### Spanish

**LISTENING** B1 **READING** B1 **WRITING** A1

**SPOKEN PRODUCTION** A2 **SPOKEN INTERACTION** A2

*Levels: A1 and A2: Basic user; B1 and B2: Independent user; C1 and C2: Proficient user*