COST Action IC1205 on Computational Social Choice: STSM Report
Applicant: Josue Alberto Ortega Sandoval
Home institution: University of Glasgow
Home country: United Kingdom
Host: Filip Matejka
Host institution: CERGE-EI at Charles University of Prague and the Economics Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences
Host country: Czech Republic
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During the STSM I worked on the structure of attention allocation problems with my host Filip Matejka, as well as his coauthors Michal Bauer, Julie Chytilová, and Vojtech Bartos. How agents allocate their attention to possibly useful information is important to understand how agents aggregate and later use such information.

Following their successful paper on attention discrimination, I conducted a field experiment to test how well theoretical predictions of rational inattention fit the behavior observed from online dating users. We find that in highly selective environments as heterosexual dating, agents belonging to groups that ex-ante more attractive receive more attention, while the opposite holds in environments that have a higher acceptance rate as homosexual dating: in those cases, candidates view as less attractive receive more attention. The same phenomena occurs in labor and rental markets in Prague.

The experiment design allows us to test several other hypothesis regarding the timing of the information revelation and the benefits of signaling, which turns out to be far from what online dating platforms claim.

Finally, I received helpful advice from Filip on a project which looks at online dating as a many-to-many matching problem. While my preliminary work shows that the usual procedures are not even pairwise stable, we can show that setwise stable procedures would have less but similar flaws as the ones currently used. Hence, the inclusion of other key aspects such as costly attention is crucial to explain the failings of some dating platforms which cannot be explained only by core stability arguments. Filip provided several insights on how to mix matching problems and costly attention beyond the traditional matching setup, and how they scope several other environments with similar problems in macroeconomics.

I am very grateful to the COST Action IC1205 on Computational Social Choice for this STSM and to Filip Matejka and CERGE-EI for their hospitality.