Application to attend the NBER's Digital Economics and AI Tutorial
Stanford University
February 12, 2025

Ariel Listo
PhD Candidate
University of Maryland
7998 Regents Dr., Symons Hall, Rm. 2200
College Park, MD 20742
alisto@umd.edu
(786) 973-1933

Background

I am a fourth-year PhD Candidate in the Agricultural and Resource Economics department at the University of Maryland and a student affiliate of the Artificial Intelligence Interdisciplinary Institute at Maryland (AIM). As an applied microeconomist, I use the tools of experimental and behavioral economics to study discrimination, gender, and human-AI interactions.

Dissertation Prospectus

I successfully defended my dissertation prospectus, titled "Understanding the Gender Negotiation Gap using Human-AI Interactions" in November 2024. In this dissertation, I hope to investigate how interactions between individuals and an artificial intelligence (AI) agent may help understand the gender negotiation gap and its implication on wage disparities. In particular, I propose to run a set of online, artefactual and framed field experiments in which individuals can choose to bargain with a human or with an AI negotiator for additional paid tasks or for bonus compensation. This research will seek to provide insights into the environments in which the gender negotiation gap may arise, the mechanisms that may help explain it, and policies that may help reduce its consequences on labor market outcomes for women and gender minorities.

My committee includes Drs. Neslihan Uler, Cory Smith, Yusufcan Masatlioglu, and Jorge Holzer. This research is currently under consideration for a National Science Foundation (NSF) Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant (DDRIG), proposal number 2447133.

Other Research Projects

The Nature of Excess: Using Randomization to Understand How Markets Equilibrate
(joint with Omar Al-Ubaydli, John A. List, and Michael K. Price).
Status: Reject and Resubmit at The Economics Journal
Abstract: How do prices adjust when markets are in disequilibrium? This paper investigates this question by comparing two models of price dynamics: the classic excess supply model developed by Leon Walras, and the excess rent model developed by Vernon

Smith. Past investigations exploring how prices adjust rely upon naturally-occurring variation in the treatment variable (prevailing price) as opposed to experimental control via randomization. We explore price dynamics using laboratory experiments wherein we control the assignment mechanism of the key treatment variable. Across two distinct market institutions, double oral auctions and decentralized bilateral bargaining, our results provide strong support for Smith's excess rent model as the driver of price adjustments.

Decision-Making under Algorithmic Recommendation: The Role of the Choice Architecture
Rhona Lantin Award for Best Qualifying Paper, University of Maryland AREC
Status: Working Paper
Abstract: Algorithmic recommendations permeate through most aspects of modern-day decision-making. Their omnipresence is a testament to their effectiveness, but why or how they work is not yet fully understood. I test how exogenous versus endogenous (algorithmic) recommendations affect choices in an incentive-compatible experiment with participants randomized into one of four recommendation regimes: no recommendation, a random recommendation, a personalized recommendation, or a personalized recommendation with information. I find that, compared to a no-recommendation baseline, the likelihood of choosing an option that is predicted to be the (theoretically) preferred alternative of a decision-maker (DM) only increases when the alternative itself is recommended and, even more so, when the recommendation includes information on why the alternative is being endorsed. In comparison to a random recommendation baseline, personalizing recommendations only increases take-up when DMs are informed. Additionally, I discuss evidence suggesting that the ambiguity preferences of a DM may serve as a moderator of these effects, especially when stakes are high.

Understanding the Drivers of Taste Discrimination Using List Experiments
(joint with Ercio A. Muñoz and Dario Sansone)
Status: In progress
Abstract: We seek to advance our understanding of labor market discrimination by disentangling whether attitudes by supervisors, co-workers, or customers may drive discrimination against sexual minorities in the workplace. We partner with a local firm to recruit a large, nationally representative sample of individuals in Chile. We exploit a double list experiment designed to elicit attitudes free of social desirability bias, followed by a survey which includes direct questions to estimate the size of the bias. Additionally, we map our findings to participants' choices to donate their earnings to one of two local LGBTQ-related NGOs. We find that respondents overreport their comfort with gay individuals in the labor market by 15 to 22 percentage points. The highest gap arises from supervisors, who report the lowest level of comfort with gay individuals as employees. Additionally, respondents' beliefs about population attitudes toward gay workers are consistently lower than their own elicited support, even after accounting for the social desirability bias. Lastly, these differences correlate with real-stakes donation behavior: the degree of overreporting is higher and the level of comfort is lower among individuals who chose to not donate any amount to the LGBTQ-related NGOs.

Course of Study

Fall 2021
Microeconomics Analysis I – Profs. Emel Filiz-Ozbay and Lawrence Ausubel
Econometrics I – Prof. Erich Battistin
Optimization in Agricultural and Resource Economics – Prof. Lars Olson

Spring 2022
Microeconomics Analysis II – Profs. Erkut Ozbay and Daniel Vincent
Econometrics II – Prof. Anna Alberini
Applied Microeconomics for Agricultural and Resource Markets – Prof. Jorge Holzer

Fall 2022
Behavioral Economics – Prof. Emel Filiz-Ozbay
Environmental and Development Economics – Prof. Louis Preonas
Agricultural Policy Analysis – Prof. Cory Smith

Spring 2023
Decision Theory – Prof. Yusufcan Masatlioglu
Experimental and Behavioral Economics – Prof. Neslihan Uler
Political Economy of Development – Prof. M. R. Sharan