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Information Redundancy Neglect versus Overconfidence: A Social Learning Experiment

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Abstract

We study social learning in a continuous action space experiment. Subjects, acting in sequence, state their belief about the value of a good, after observing their predecessors' statements and a private signal. We compare the behavior in the laboratory with the Perfect Bayesian Equilibrium prediction and the predictions of bounded rationality models of decision making: the redundancy of information neglect model and the overconfidence model. The results of our experiment are in line with the predictions of the overconfidence model and at odds with the others'.

1 Introduction

Many economic decisions, from the most mundane ones, like the choice of a restaurant to the most important ones, like the adoption of a new technology for a firm or the adoption of a new medical protocol for a physician, require making inferences about an underlying state of nature (e.g., which restaurant or technology or medical protocol is the best one). In many of these situations, economic agents have some private information about the state of nature and also have information about the choice of others (e.g., other diners, firms, doctors) who faced the same decision problem in the past. Being able to make inferences about the underlying state by using the information conveyed by others' decisions (which is referred to as "social learning") may be very valuable, but may also have some pathological effects, such as herding on incorrect choices.

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An important aspect affecting how accurate the inference can be is the choice set from which agents can pick their actions. While with a discrete action space social learning typically leads to inefficient outcomes ("informational cascades;" Banerjee, 1992 and Bikhchandani *et al.*, 1992), with a continuous action space a sequence of rational decision makers are typically able to infer the information received by the predecessors perfectly, and learning is efficient (Lee, 1993).

The intuition for this result is very simple. When agents choose in a continuous action space, their action reflects their information very precisely, under the assumption of full rationality. As a result, observing a predecessor's action is equivalent to observing the information he has. As more agents make their decisions in a sequence, more information is aggregated, and eventually the state of nature is learned and the best decision is reached.

A crucial ingredient in this story is that agents are able to make inferences correctly. If agents are less sophisticated, the process of learning may be inefficient despite a continuous action space. A series of studies have questioned the ability of human subjects to make correct inferences and revisited standard models of social learning (both with a discrete and a continuous action space) by analyzing what happens when this is not the case. Essentially, these works depart from the assumption of full rationality used in the previous literature and propose alternative ways of modelling how economic agents form expectations.

Although various biases may affect the process of learning, two aspects have attracted particular attention: information redundancy neglect (also sometimes referred to as correlation neglect), on the one hand; the tendency of human subjects to put more weight on their private information than on the public information contained in the choices of other participants, on the other. These biases, proposed not only in Economics but also in Psychology and in other social and cognitive sciences, seem particularly salient for social learning. When making inferences from the choices of others, agents may not fully take into account that others have themselves been influenced by the same sources of information (redundancy neglect). On the other, hand, they may consider themselves better at making a particular decision than the others they observe (overconfidence). Of course, these biases may coexist in human behavior.

The purpose of this work is to study, through a series of controlled experiments, social learning in a continuous action space in which agents move in sequence one after the other and observe their predecessors' choices as well as a private signal (the private information). Our interest is in understanding how the private signals observed by the predecessors and the signal observed by the agent influence the agent's decision. In the case of the predecessors' signals, we are interested in understanding whether the influence depends on whether the signal was observed by an early mover or a late mover in the sequence. Our objective is to shed light on whether the rational paradigm or any of the bounded rationality theories of information redundancy neglect or overconfidence capture human subjects' behaviors.

Before illustrating the experiment, let us discuss the different bounded rationality approaches in more detail. Information redundancy neglect in social learning has been studied, for instance, by Eyster and Rabin (2010). In their work, while each agent uses his private information and learns from others, he is convinced that others only use their private information: as a result, he interprets a predecessor's action as if it simply reflected the agent's private information. Since agents fail to account that their predecessors have already incorporated earlier signals in their decisions, early signals have an excessive impact on later decisions.[1] In a similar spirit, Bohren (2016) studies a social learning environment in which agents have a misspecified model about their predecessors. While in the economy there is a fraction p of agents who (in addition to their own signal) observe the actions of others, agents believe that this fraction is actually $\widehat{p}$. Bohren (2016)'s model generalizes Eyster and Rabin (2010)'s model, which is obtained when $p = 1$ and $\widehat{p} = 0$. As in Eyster and Rabin (2010), when $\widehat{p} < p$, there is an overweighting of early signals, since agents read actions as if they were reflecting more private signals than they actually do.

As we said, information redundancy neglect has emerged in studies well beyond the specific topic of social learning, and even well beyond the boundaries of economics. A vast literature in statistics, sociology, computer science, physics and economics has adopted the DeGroot (1974) model of learning. In that model, when agents repeatedly communicate, they update their beliefs by taking a weighted average of their neighbors' beliefs and their own belief from the previous period. Clearly, in this model agents do not adjust correctly for repetitions and dependencies in information that they observe multiple times. Golub and Jackson (2010) apply the DeGroot updating rule to the study of learning in networks. An earlier study by DeMarzo et al. (2003) presents a very similar idea, by letting agents update as Bayesian but not taking into account repetitions. They label the failure to adjust properly for information repetitions as persuasion bias. Under persuasion bias, individuals do not account accurately for which components of the information they receive is new and which is repetition.[2] Information redundancy neglect in our context, no matter how it is modelled, implies that signals observed by earlier movers have more influence than signals observed by later movers.

An alternative paradigm some scholars have suggested to understand social learning

[1] Redundancy neglect was not the focus of a study by Guarino and Jehiel (2013); nevertheless, they also find an overweighting of early signals in a model of social learning with a continuous action space. We will discuss this work in the next section.

[2] We refer the reader to DeMarzo *et al.* (2003) and Golub and Jackson (2010) for further references and discussions of the links to the psychology and sociology literatures.

is that agents tend to put more weight on their private information than on the public information contained in the choices of others. Such a tendency is documented in various studies (e.g. Nöth and Weber, 2003; Çelen and Kariv, 2004; Goeree *et al.*, 2007; and De Filippis *et al.*, 2018), and it is typically referred to as "overconfidence," since subjects seem to trust their own information (or own ability to learn from it) more than their predecessors' information (or ability to learn from it). One interpretation that we will favor is that agents tend to mistrust the ability of their predecessors to understand their private signals correctly.

In a multi-stage, multi-player game, one also needs to specify what subjects think about the overconfidence of others. If the overconfidence bias is common knowledge (this is the simplest formulation of overconfidence also adopted in a number of applied works), one can show that in a continuous action space agents are still able to infer correctly the signals of others. As a result, all previous signals still have the same weight in the inference process, but lower than the agent's private signal's weight. This is in sharp contrast with the early signals overweighting prediction of the models discussed above.

The overconfidence bias has been studied in many areas of economics other than social learning. In the theory of asset pricing, for instance, many works (e.g., Kyle and Wang, 1997; Daniel *et al.*, 1998; Odean, 1998; and Daniel *et al.*, 2001) model traders' overconfidence as their overestimation of the precision of their private signal about security values. This can be interpreted as traders' overconfidence about the information they receive or overconfidence about their own ability to interpret the information (Odean, 1998). Note that this approach to overconfidence is closely related to the definition of overconfidence about the precision of the own signal versus the signals of others in the social learning literature.[3]

We contribute to the understanding of the social learning process through some controlled experiments in which the different theoretical models just discussed can be carefully tested. Specifically, we replicate a simple theoretical model of social learning with a continuous action space in the laboratory. In our experiment subjects have to predict whether a good is worth 0 or 100 units, two events that are, *a priori*, equally likely. A first subject receives a noisy symmetric binary signal about the true value realization: either a "good signal," which is more likely if the value is 100; or a "bad signal," which is more likely if the value is 0. After receiving his signal, the subject is asked to choose a number between 0 and 100, which represents the subjective probability (expressed as a percentage) that the value of the good is 100. To elicit his belief we use a quadratic scoring rule. We then ask a second subject to make the same type of prediction based on the observation of the first subject's decision only. Then, we provide the second subject with another, conditionally independent, signal

[3]We refer to Odean (1998) for a discussion of the vast psychology literature on overconfidence about the own private information.

about the value of the good and ask him to make a new prediction. We then ask a third subject to make his prediction based on the observation of the first subject's decision and of the second subject's second decision. We then provide the subject with another signal and ask him to make a new prediction. The procedure continues until all subjects have made their predictions.

The results of our experiment are supportive of the overconfidence model and at odds with the predictions of the Perfect Bayesian Equilibrium and of the redundancy of information neglect model. When we consider the first action taken by subjects, we observe that subjects do not put higher weight on early signals than on late signals. Early decisions in the sequence do not have an undue influence on later decisions. On the contrary, predecessors' signals have a weight lower than one and constant, as predicted by the overconfidence model. Moreover, when we consider the second action taken by subjects, we observe that subjects put a weight not statistically different from one on their own signal, again in line with the overconfidence model.

It is important to note that, while we explicitly test how a specific model of information redundancy neglect fits with the data, the results of our experiment are at odds with any model of such a bias, since information redundancy neglect essentially means that early decisions have a disproportionate effect on subsequent decisions. In the laboratory, instead, all actions have the same effect and this effect is even lower than what predicted by the Perfect Bayesian Equilibrium.

It is also worth mentioning that we also ran another treatment in which the same subject received a sequence of signals. This treatment mimics the social learning treatment except that now the same subject observes directly all past signals. In sharp contrast with the social learning treatment, in this treatment the action that subjects take is consistent with the Bayesian one, that is, the weights on all signals are the same, and not statistically different from that corresponding to the objective precision of signals. Thus, our finding in the social learning treatment can safely be attributed to overconfidence as interpreted above, as opposed to being the result of some form of non-Bayesian updating or some form of recency effect, according to which more recent news would have more weight than older news (such alternative theories would imply that we should see departures from the Bayesian prediction in the individual decision making treatment, which we do not).

In relation to the experimental social learning literature, we note that in our experiment subjects' beliefs are not hidden under a binary decision: we observe how subjects learn from others in great detail. In particular,

1. our experimental design, with belief elicitation, rather than with subjects choosing in a discrete action space, allows us to observe how subjects weigh each predecessor's signal

(action) directly, thus allowing us to test various models of social learning that differ in their predictions about these weights;

2. our experimental design, with belief elicitation before and after receiving the private signal, allows us to identify in a neat way the weight subjects put on their own signal separately from the weight they put on the predecessors' signals (or actions);[4]

3. our data show that subjects are overconfident in the precise sense that they weight their signal as a Bayesian subject would do but underweigh the predecessors' signals. Our data do not support models of information redundancy neglect.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. After a brief discussion of the related literature (Section 1.1), Section 2 describes the theoretical model of social learning and the different theoretical predictions. Section 3 presents the experiment. Section 4 contains the results. Section 5 offers a discussion and concludes. An Appendix contains additional material.

1.1 Related Literature

Most of the papers in the experimental social learning literature have used set ups with a discrete action space. A partial exception is the interesting work by Çelen and Kariv (2004) who aim to distinguish informational cascades from herd behavior. In their experiment the action space is still binary, but subjects are asked to choose a threshold in an interval before receiving the signal (one of the two actions is then taken depending on the signal realization, a procedure similar to a Becker-DeGroot-Marshack mechanism that allows the experimentalists to elicit the median belief). Their econometric model shows that subjects give too little weight to the information revealed by the predecessors' choices relative to their own private information. Since early decision makers tend to rely a lot on their own private information, their actions are informative about their signals, but this is not well taken into account by their successors. Our findings about overconfidence share similarities with those of Çelen and Kariv (2004) and our analysis reveals that overconfidence in our setting is the result of underweighting predecessors' information rather than inflating the precision of one own's information. Note that, in addition, our setting allows us to estimate finely the relative weights attached to the various predecessors' signals as a function of where they lie in the

[4] The social learning theories we will study differ in the way agents learn from others, but are identical in the way they learn from their own signal. Social learning is different since the theories postulate various ways of inferring signals from actions. According to all theories, instead, agents update their beliefs upon observing their private signal in a Bayesian fashion.

sequence, and such estimations are of essential importance to be able to test different models of social learning, as explained above.

Among experiments with discrete action space, overconfidence is documented in Nöth and Weber (2003). They conduct an experiment with binary actions and with binary signals of different precisions. They find that subjects tend to follow their signal even in circumstances in which it would be optimal to follow the herd (e.g., at time 2 upon receiving a signal of weak precision and different realization from the action taken at time 1). Kübler and Weizsäcker (2004) conduct a binary action space experiment too, and study subject's depth of reasoning through an error-rate model, which differs from a Quantal Response Equilibrium model since no consistency between beliefs about error rates and actual error rates is imposed. They find that subjects underweigh the information contained in the predecessors' actions and also fail to realise that the predecessors' actions were themselves influenced by the history of actions they observed. Note that this last finding is an indication of information redundancy neglect. Essentially, subjects seem to use a simple "counting heuristic" in which they count the number of predecessors choosing action A or action B and attribute a lower information content than it actually has to each action (and independently of the specific sequence). Goeree et al. (2007) present an experiment similar to the seminal work of Anderson and Holt (1997) but with long sequences of decisions. Their main conclusion is that "subjects tend to overweight their signals, or, alternatively, underweight the public prior generated by past publicly observed choices." Goeree et al. (2007) reach this conclusion by relying on the structural estimation of a QRE model. We can dispense with the assumptions of a QRE model thanks to our experimental design and, in particular, to our belief elicitation before and after receiving private information. We find that subject underweight the predecessors' signals, whereas correctly weighting their own signal. It is also interesting to note that Goeree et al. (2007) also consider a non-equilibrium model in which expectations about errors rates may be incorrect but find no strong evidence for such a model.

Two more recent papers related to our work are Eyster et al. (2015) and Cavatorta et al. (2018). In their work, Eyster et al. (2015) present two treatments, one being similar to ours. In their experiment, though, subjects' task is simpler, in that they have to sum up the signal they receive and those received by the predecessors (not observed directly, but inferable through the predecessors' choices). They find that a large fraction of choices is perfectly in line with the PBE predictions. Moreover, they do not find overconfidence, as we have defined it. Perhaps, the difference in results is due to the difference in the difficulty of the task. When subjects face a simpler task, they are better able to behave rationally and trust that the predecessors did so too.[5] Cavatorta et al. (2018) present some experiments

[5] Eyster *et al.* (2015) also present a treatment in which more than one action is taken at each point in

with binary action space in which one of the two actions is never observed (the same way we do not observe people who consider the possibility of making an investment but do not make it); the other action is observable but with noise. In one treatment, subjects observe the sequence of individual decisions (only the observable action) whereas in another they observe an aggregate statistics on how many predecessors have chosen the observable action. If subjects used the simple counting heuristic, the results of the two treatments should be the same, but they are not. Subjects perform much better in the treatment in which they observe, at least partially, the sequence, indicating that they do take the sequence into account.

2 The Theoretical Model

In our economy there are T agents who make a decision in sequence. Time is discrete and indexed by $t = 1, 2, ..., T$. Each agent, indexed by t, is chosen to take an action only at time t (in other words agents are numbered according to their position in the sequence). The sequential order in which agents act is exogenously, randomly determined, with each sequence equally likely.

There is a good that can take two values, $V \in \{0, 100\}$. The two values are equally likely. Agent t takes an action a_t in the action space $[0, 100]$. The agent's payoff depends on his choice and on the value of the good. The payoff is quadratic and, in particular, equal to $-(V - a_t)^2$. Each agent t receives a private signal $s_t \in \{0, 1\}$ correlated with the true value V. Specifically, he receives a symmetric binary signal distributed as follows:

$$\Pr(s_t = 1 \mid V = 100) = \Pr(s_t = 0 \mid V = 0) = q_t.$$

We assume that, conditional on the value of the good, the signals are independently distributed over time, with precision $q_t \in (0.5, 1]$. Since the signal $s_t = 1$ increases the probability that the value is 100, we will also refer to it as the good signal, and to $s_t = 0$ as the bad signal.

In addition to observing a private signal, each agent observes the sequence of actions taken by the predecessors. We denote the history of actions until time $t-1$ by h_t, that is, $h_t = \{a_1, a_2, ..., a_{t-1}\}$ (and $h_1 = \varnothing$). Agent t's information is then represented by the couple (h_t, s_t). Given the information (h_t, s_t), the agent chooses a_t to maximize his expected payoff

the sequence. This is based on work by Eyster and Rabin (2014) who illustrate the implications of rational herding in an extended set up in which more than one action is taken at the same time. The two experiments are independent; ours is antecedent, conducted in 2009-10-11.

$E^S[-(V-a_t)^2|h_t, s_t]$; therefore, his optimal action is $a_t^* = E^S(V|h_t, s_t)$.[6]

We now describe the different theoretical predictions.

Let us start with the Perfect Bayesian Equilibrium (PBE). Given that the action space is continuous, each action perfectly reveals the signal realization and its precision. Therefore, observing the sequence of actions is identical to observing the sequence of signals and the process of learning is perfectly efficient. These observations lead to the following proposition:

Proposition 1 (Lee, 1993)
In the PBE, after a sequence of signals $\{s_1, s_2, ..., s_t\}$*, agent* t *chooses action* $a_t^{PBE} = a_t^*(s_1, s_2, ..., s_t)$ *such that*

$$\frac{a_t^{PBE}}{100-a_t^{PBE}} = \frac{a_t^*(s_1, s_2, .., s_t)}{100-a_t^*(s_1, s_2, .., s_t)} = \Pi_{i=1}^{t}\left(\frac{q_i}{1-q_i}\right)^{2s_i-1}.$$

That is, the agent at time t *acts as if he observed the sequence of all signals until time* t*.*

Next is the "best response trailing naïve inference" (BRTNI) play proposed by Eyster and Rabin (2010). According to this theory, agents do not realize that predecessors' actions already incorporate previous signals. Each agent learns from his own signals and from the actions of his predecessors, but believes his predecessors choose their actions on the basis of their own signal only. Because of this, agent 3 in a sequence of decisions makers interprets agent 2's decision as revealing his private information only. But in fact agent 2's action also reflects agent 1's signal, which implies that agent 3 counts signal 1 twice, first through agent 1's action and second through agent 2's action.[7] By the same logic, as more agents make their decisions, early signals receive more and more weight. Indeed, the weight on predecessors' signals increases exponentially with time. That leads to a severe overweighting of early signals:

Proposition 2 (Eyster and Rabin, 2010)
If agents behave as in BRTNI, after a sequence of signals $\{s_1, s_2, ..., s_t\}$*, agent* t *chooses action* $a_t^{BRTNI} = a_t^{**}(s_1, s_2, ..., s_t)$ *such that*

$$\frac{a_t^{BRTNI}}{100-a_t^{BRTNI}} = \frac{a_t^{**}(s_1, s_2, .., s_t)}{100-a_t^{**}(s_1, s_2, .., s_t)} = \Pi_{i=1}^{t-1}\left(\frac{q_i}{1-q_i}\right)^{(2s_i-1)(2^{t-i-1})}\left(\frac{q_t}{1-q_t}\right)^{2s_t-1}.$$

That is, the agent at time t *acts as if, in addition to his own signal, he had observed time* i *signal* 2^{t-i-1} *times, for any* $i<t$*.*

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[6] The superscipt S stands for subjective, since we want to allow for subjective expectations in some of the theories discussed below.

[7] By this we mean that the agent at time 3 acts *as if* he had observed two time-1 signals.

Note that, while in the PBE each signal has an equal weight of 1 in the choice of the action, in BRTNI the weights are exponentially decreasing.

Another study finding an overweighting of early signals in a model of social learning with a continuous action space is that by Guarino and Jehiel (2013). Their work is aimed at describing a steady state of an economy in which agents only understand the mapping between actions and the state of nature, but not the map with the history of actions. In other words, agents do not take into account the history of decisions and their impact on subsequent agents' decisions; they only consider the aggregate statistics conditional on a state of nature. Imposing a consistency condition on the aggregate statistics — in agreement with the Analogy Based Expectation Equilibrium (ABEE) of Jehiel (2005) — and requiring a genericity condition on the precisions, Guarino and Jehiel (2013) obtain the following equilibrium result:

Proposition 3 (Guarino and Jehiel, 2013)
In the ABEE, after a sequence of signals $\{s_1, s_2, ..., s_t\}$*, agent* t *chooses action* $a_t^{ABEE} = a_t^{***}(s_1, s_2, ..., s_t)$ *such that*

$$\frac{a_t^{ABEE}}{100 - a_t^{ABEE}} = \frac{a_t^{***}(s_1, s_2, .., s_t)}{100 - a_t^{***}(s_1, s_2, .., s_t)} = \Pi_{i=1}^{t-1} \left(\frac{q_i}{1-q_i}\right)^{(2s_i-1)(t-i)} \left(\frac{q_t}{1-q_t}\right)^{2s_t-1}.$$

That is, the agent at time t *acts as if, in addition to his own signal, he had observed time* i *signal* $t-i$ *times, for any* $i < t$*.*

Note that in the ABEE each agent t's action in the sequence is taken as if the agent had observed a signal i $(i < t)$ $t-1$ times, a much less severe overweighting than that in Eyster and Rabin (2010). It is also worth observing that while this work was not aimed at describing information redundancy neglect, nevertheless, the fact that agents do not take into account the impact of the sequence of decisions on successive actions leads to a form of redundancy neglect. In equilibrium, agents behave as if all actions had the same information content; this content is, however, determined in equilibrium by the aggregate frequencies, since this is what agents focus on.

These predictions are immediately derived from theories already proposed in the literature. As we explained in the Introduction, an alternative paradigm assumes that agents are "overconfident" in that they think others have a lower ability to understand their private signal. A simple interpretation is that agents think that others (and not themselves) may misread a good signal as a bad signal or vice versa. This is equivalent to thinking that others receive a signal of lower precision (which they correctly understand). Essentially, instead of having correct expectations on a predecessor i's signal precision, agent t thinks that agent i's signal precision is lower, so that the likelihood ratio after observing an action is $\left(\frac{q_i}{1-q_i}\right)^{(2s_i-1)k}$

rather than $\left(\frac{q_i}{1-q_i}\right)^{(2s_i-1)}$, where $k \in (0,1)$. We refer to this belief as "k-overconfidence."[8] If k-overconfidence is common knowledge (i.e., each agent is k-overconfident and thinks others are k-overconfident, etc.), then it is easy to see that each predecessor's signal realization can be inferred from the predecessor's action. The agent, however, attributes to each such signal a lower precision. For instance, consider the case in which the first three signals are good. The first agent chooses a_1^{OC} such that $\frac{a_1^{OC}}{100-a_1^{OC}} = \left(\frac{q_1}{1-q_1}\right)$. Agent 2, however, "discounts" this action, since he thinks agent 1 is less able to make the correct inference from the signal. Hence, after receiving his signal, agent 2, chooses a_2^{OC} such that $\frac{a_2^{OC}}{100-a_2^{OC}} = \left(\frac{q_1}{1-q_1}\right)^k \left(\frac{q_2}{1-q_2}\right)$. Agent 3 agrees with agent 2 in reading agent 1's action (and so inferring his signal). Moreover, from observing action a_2^{OC}, he infers agent 2's signal, since $\left(\frac{q_2}{1-q_2}\right) = \frac{a_2^{OC}}{100-a_2^{OC}} \left(\frac{q_1}{1-q_1}\right)^{-k}$. He then "discounts" agent 2's action and chooses a_3^{OC} such that $\frac{a_3^{OC}}{100-a_3^{OC}} = \left(\frac{q_1}{1-q_1}\right)^k \left(\frac{q_2}{1-q_2}\right)^k \left(\frac{q_3}{1-q_3}\right)$.[9] We refer to this model of learning as the "overconfidence model" (OC). The next proposition, proven in Appendix A, describes the equilibrium of the OC model:

Proposition 4 *Suppose agents are k-overconfident and this is common knowledge. In equilibrium, after a sequence of signals $\{s_1, s_2, ..., s_t\}$, agent t chooses action $a_t^{OC} = a_t^{****}(s_1, s_2, ..., s_t)$ such that*

$$\frac{a_t^{OC}}{100-a_t^{OC}} = \frac{a_t^{****}(s_1, s_2, .., s_t)}{100-a_t^{****}(s_1, s_2, .., s_t)} = \Pi_{i=1}^{t-1}\left(\frac{q_i}{1-q_i}\right)^{(2s_i-1)k}\left(\frac{q_t}{1-q_t}\right)^{2s_t-1},$$

where $k \in (0,1)$. That is, the agent at time t acts as if he had observed the sequence of all signals until time t, but attributing precision $\frac{\left(\frac{q_i}{1-q_i}\right)^k}{1+\left(\frac{q_i}{1-q_i}\right)^k}$ to all predecessors' signals.

To conclude, it is worth making two observations. First, the theories we have presented differ in the way agents learn from others and are identical in the way they learn from their own signal. For all theories, agents update their beliefs upon observing their private signal in a Bayesian fashion. Social learning is, instead, different since the theories postulate various ways of forming expectations on the value of the good from others' actions, that is, various

[8] Note that, in agreement with much literature, we are defining overconfidence in relative terms (the agent is confident that he can interpret the signal better then his predecessors). An alternative definition would be that the agent is even overconfident in his own signal, that is, he thinks the signal is more informative than it is. We will come back to this point in Section 5.

[9] For the previous models, we have not explicitly discussed whether the precisions q_i are private information or common knowledge. For the PBE this is irrelevant since each action reveals both the signal realization and its precision. For the BRTNI and ABEE, the precisions do not have to be known either. For the OC model, one interpretation is that the objective precisions are common knowledge, nevertheless agents use subjective precisions since they believe the predecessors misread the signal realization with some probability. However, for the same logic as for the PBE, the precisions do not need to be common knowledge (since, given that k is common knowledge, agents can infer them from the actions).

ways of inferring signals from actions.[10]

Second, while the propositions above express the relation between an agent's action and his predecessors' signals, the theories also offer a prediction in terms of relations between an agent's action and his predecessors' actions. Let us denote agent t's weight on the predecessor i's signal by $\beta_{t,i}$ and the weight on the predecessor i's action by $\gamma_{t,i}$. In other words, let

$$\begin{aligned}
\ln \frac{a_t}{100-a_t} &= \sum_{i=1}^{t-1} \beta_{t,i}(2s_i-1)\ln\left(\frac{q_i}{1-q_i}\right) + (2s_t-1)\ln\left(\frac{q_t}{1-q_t}\right), \\
\ln \frac{a_t}{100-a_t} &= \sum_{i=1}^{t-1} \gamma_{t,i}\ln\left(\frac{a_i}{100-a_i}\right) + (2s_t-1)\ln\left(\frac{q_t}{1-q_t}\right).
\end{aligned}$$

We summarize the relations between $\beta_{t,i}$'s and $\gamma_{t,i}$'s in the next proposition that is proven in Appendix A.

Proposition 5 *Consider the matrix* $\mathbf{\Gamma}$ *containing the weights* $\gamma_{t,i}$ *that agent* t *puts on the predecessors's actions and the matrix* $\mathbf{B}$ *the matrix containing the weights* $\beta_{t,i}$ *that he puts on the predecessors's signals:*

$$\mathbf{\Gamma} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & \cdots & \cdots & 0 \\ -\gamma_{2,1} & 1 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ -\gamma_{3,1} & -\gamma_{3,2} & 1 & & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & & \ddots & \vdots \\ -\gamma_{t,1} & -\gamma_{t,2} & \cdots & -\gamma_{t,t-1} & 1 \end{pmatrix} \text{ and } \mathbf{B} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & \cdots & \cdots & 0 \\ \beta_{2,1} & 1 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ \beta_{3,1} & \beta_{3,2} & 1 & & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & & \ddots & \vdots \\ \beta_{t,1} & \beta_{t,2} & \cdots & \beta_{t,t-1} & 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Matrix $\mathbf{\Gamma}$ *is the inverse of matrix* $\mathbf{B}$*:* $\mathbf{\Gamma} = \mathbf{B}^{-1}$*. Specifically, for the equilibrium solutions we considered, this implies that:*

a) *In the PBE, agent* t *chooses action* a_t^{PBE} *such that*

$$\frac{a_t^{PBE}}{100-a_t^{PBE}} = \frac{a_{t-1}^{PBE}}{100-a_{t-1}^{PBE}}\left(\frac{q_t}{1-q_t}\right)^{2s_t-1}.$$

[10] To have a neat understanding of how people learn from others and of how they use their own signal, as we discussed in the Introduction, in the experiment we ask each subjects to make two decisions: one after observing the predecessors' only and another after observing the signal too. The theoretical predictions concerning the first action are given in our propositions by the first part of the formulas, excluding the multiplier $\left(\frac{q_t}{1-q_t}\right)^{2s_t-1}$.

b) *In BRTNI, agent t chooses action* a_t^{BRTNI} *such that*

$$\frac{a_t^{BRTNI}}{100-a_t^{BRTNI}}=\prod\nolimits_{i=1}^{t-1}\frac{a_{t-i}^{BRTNI}}{100-a_{t-i}^{BRTNI}}\left(\frac{q_t}{1-q_t}\right)^{2s_t-1}.$$

c) *In ABEE, agent t chooses action* a_t^{ABEE} *such that*

$$\frac{a_t^{ABEE}}{100-a_t^{ABEE}}=\prod\nolimits_{i=1}^{t-1}\left(\frac{a_{t-i}^{ABEE}}{100-a_{t-i}^{ABEE}}\right)^{sign(\sin(\frac{t-i}{3}\pi))}\left(\frac{q_t}{1-q_t}\right)^{2s_t-1},$$

where the function $sign(x)=\begin{cases}+1 \text{ if } x>0,\\ 0 \text{ if } x=0,\\ -1 \text{ if } x<0.\end{cases}$

d) *In the OC model, agent t chooses action* a_t^{OC} *such that*

$$\frac{a_t^{OC}}{100-a_t^{OC}}=\prod\nolimits_{i=1}^{t-1}\left(\frac{a_{t-i}^{OC}}{100-a_{t-i}^{OC}}\right)^{k(1-k)^{t-i-1}}\left(\frac{q_t}{1-q_t}\right)^{2s_t-1}.$$

In the PBE, an agent's action is just equal to his immediate predecessor's action (belief) just updated on the basis of the private signal. All previous actions have no weight since all the information (i.e., private signals) until time $t-1$ is contained in agent $t-1$'s action. Agent t would make exactly the same inference if instead of observing the entire sequence of actions, he only observed the immediate predecessor's action. In the case of BRTNI, instead, agent t's action depends on *all* predecessors actions, with equal weight equal to 1. This is in fact the way BRTNI is constructed: by assumption, agents believe that the predecessors' actions are chosen on the basis of their private information only. For the ABEE there is no simple intuition in the action space. The reason is that in the ABEE an action is chosen on the basis of the aggregate frequencies conditional on the value of the good, and not on the basis of the sequence. The formula in the proposition shows that actions are weighted in a cyclical way, as implied by the trigonometric function. Finally, for the OC model, agent t's action depends on *all* predecessors actions, but the weights are increasing (so that the early actions have little weight). Intuitively, note that when k approaches 0, the weight on all predecessors' actions goes to 0; when k approaches 1, the weight on the predecessors' action goes to 0, except for the immediate predecessor for which it approaches 1, as in the PBE; for intermediate values, the weights are increasing: early actions keep counting, but less and less, since the information they contain is already partially incorporated in subsequent actions (otherwise the agent would essentially be inferring the same private signal from more than one action).

3 The Experiment and the Experimental Design

3.1 The Experiment

We ran the experiment in the ELSE Experimental Laboratory at the Department of Economics at University College London (UCL) in the fall 2009, winter 2010 and fall 2011. The subject pool mainly consisted of undergraduate students in all disciplines at UCL. They had no previous experience with this experiment. In total, we recruited 267 students. Each subject participated in one session only.

The sessions started with written instructions given to all subjects (provided in Appendix *D*). We explained to participants that they were all receiving the same instructions. Subjects could ask clarification questions, which we answered privately. The experiment was programmed and conducted with a built-on-purpose software.

Here we describe the baseline treatment (SL1). In the next section, we will explain the experimental design. We ran five sessions for this treatment. In each session we used 10 participants. The procedures were the following:

1. Each session consisted of fifteen rounds. At the beginning of each round, the computer program randomly chose the value of a good. The value was equal to 0 or 100 with the same probability, independently of previous realizations.

2. In each round we asked all subjects to make decisions in sequence, one after the other. For each round, the sequence was randomly chosen by the computer software. Each subject had an equal probability of being chosen in any position in the sequence.

3. Participants were not told the value of the good. They knew, however, that they would receive information about the value, in the form of a symmetric binary signal. If the value was equal to 100, a participant would receive a "green ball" with probability 0.7 and a "red ball" with probability 0.3; if the value was equal to 0, the probabilities were inverted. That is, the green signal corresponded to $s_t = 1$ and the red signal to $s_t = 0$, the signal precision q_t was equal to 0.7 at any time.

4. As we said, each round consisted of 10 periods. In the first period a subject was randomly chosen to make a decision. He received a signal and chose a number between 0 and 100, up to two decimal points.

5. The other subjects observed the decision made by the first subject on their screens. The identity of the subject was not revealed.

6. In the second period, a second subject was randomly selected. He was asked to choose a number between 0 and 100, having observed the first subject's choice only.

7. After he had made that choice, he received a signal and had to make a second decision. This time, therefore, the decision was based on the observation of the predecessor's action and of the private signal.

8. In the third period, a third subject was randomly selected and asked to make two decisions, similarly to the second subject: a first decision after observing the choice of the first subject and the second choice of the second subject; a second decision after observing the private signal too. The same procedure was repeated for all the remaining periods, until all subjects had acted. Hence, each subject, from the second to the tenth, made two decisions: one after observing the history of all (second) decisions made by the predecessors; the other after observing the private signal too.

9. At the end of the round, after all 10 subjects had made their decisions, subjects observed a feedback screen, in which they observed the value of the good and their own payoff for that round. The payoffs were computed as $100 - 0.01(V - a_t)^2$ of a fictitious experimental currency called "lira." After participants had observed their payoffs and clicked on an OK button, the software moved on to the next round.

Note that essentially we asked subjects to state their beliefs. To elicit the beliefs, we used a quadratic scoring function, a quite standard elicitation method. In the instructions, we followed Nyarko and Schotter (2002) and explained to subjects that to maximize the amount of money they could expect to gain, it was in their interest to state their true belief.[11]

As should be clear from this description, compared to the existing experimental literature on social learning / informational cascades / herd behavior, we made two important procedural changes. First, in previous experiments subjects were asked to make a decision in a discrete (typically binary) action space, whereas we ask subjects to choose actions in a very rich space which practically replicates the continuum. This allows us to elicit their beliefs, rather than just observing whether they prefer one action to another.[12] Second,

[11] This explanation helps the subjects, since they do not have to solve the maximization problem by themselves (and to which extent they are able to do so is not the aim of this paper). For a discussion of methodological issues related to elicitation methods, see the recent survey by Schotter and Trevino (2014).

[12] Within the discrete action space experiments, exceptions to the binary action space are the financial market experiments of Cipriani and Guarino (2005, 2009) and Drehman *et al.* (2005) where subjects can choose to buy, to sell or not to trade. In the interesting experimental design of Çelen and Kariv (2004),

in previous experiments subjects made one decision after observing both the predecessors' actions and the signal. In our experiment, instead, they made two decisions, one based on public information only and one based on the private information as well.[13]

To compute the final payment, we randomly chose (with equal chance) one round among the first five, one among rounds $6-10$ and one among the last five rounds. For each of these rounds we then chose either decision 1 or decision 2 with equal chance (with the exception of subject 1, who was paid according to the only decision he made in the round). We summed up the payoffs obtained in these decisions and, then, converted the sum into pounds at the exchange rate of 100 liras for 7 GBP. Moreover, we paid a participation fee of £5. Subjects were paid in cash, in private, at the end of the experiment. On average, in this treatment subjects earned £21 for a 2 hour experiment.

3.2 Experimental Design

Social Learning (SL). In addition to the social learning treatment (SL1) just described, we ran a second treatment (SL2) which only differed from the first because the signal had a precision which was randomly drawn in the interval $[0.7, 0.71]$ as opposed to having a constant precision of 0.7 as in SL1. Each subject observed not only the ball color but also the exact precision of his own signal. A third treatment (SL3) was identical to SL2, with the exception that instead of having sequences of 10 subjects, we had sequences of 4 subjects. Given the smaller number of subjects, each round lasted less time; for this reason, we decided to run 30 rounds per session, rather than 15. We have no evidence that the outcomes from these three treatments are any different. In particular, for each period, we ran a Wilcoxon rank-sum test on the session-specific medians, separately for the first and the second decision taken by subjects. Except in one case, which we attribute to chance, we never reject the null hypothesis that outcomes come from the same distribution (the results of these tests are reported in Appendix B). Therefore, we consider the three treatments as just one experimental condition.[14] We will refer to it as the SL treatment.[15]

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subjects choose a cut off value in a continuous signal space: depending on the realization of the signal, one of the two actions is implemented (as in a Becker, DeGroot and Marschak, 1964, mechanism). That design allows the authors to distinguish herd behavior from informational cascades.

[13] Cipriani and Guarino (2009) use a quasi strategy method, asking subject to make decisions conditional on either signal they might receive. Still, at each time, a subject never makes a decision based only on the predecessors' decisions.

[14] Drawing the precision from the tiny interval $[0.7, 0.71]$, instead of having the simpler set up with fixed precision equal to 0.7, was in line with models such as Eyster and Rabin (2010) and Guarino and Jehiel (2013), where the precision is indeed different for each agent. Reducing the length of the sequence to 4 subjects was instead motivated by the opportuneness to collect more data for the first periods of the sequence.

[15] Since the results of SL1 and SL2 were not statistically different, we did not run more treatments with signals of different precision. Moreover, as we will see, in the experiment we observed a lot of heterogeneity

Individual Decision Making (IDM). In the social learning treatments subjects make decisions after observing private signals and the actions of others. Clearly, we may expect departures from the PBE even independently of the social learning aspect if subjects do not update in a Bayesian fashion. To control for this, we ran a treatment in which subjects observed a sequence of signals and made more than one decision.[16] Specifically, a subject received a signal (as subject 1 in the SL treatments) and had to make a choice in the interval $[0, 100]$. Then, with a 50% probability, he received another signal and had to make a second decision (similarly to the second decision of subject 2 in the SL treatments). Then, he could make two more decisions, and the probability of moving from one decision to the next was always a 50%. Note that, at the cost of collecting less data, we decided not to ask subjects to make more than one decision in all rounds. Our purpose was to make the task of the subject as close possible as possible to that of a subject in the SL treatments. In other words, we wanted the subject to make his first decision not knowing whether he would be asked to make a second one; the second without knowing whether he could make a third, and so on. This way, his decisions were made in conditions as close as possible to the SL treatments.

Table 1: Treatments' Features

	SL1	SL2	SL3	IDM
Signal precision	0.7	[0.7,0.71]	[0.7,0.71]	0.7
Sequence	10	10	4	1 or 2 or 3 or 4
Subjects in a group	10	10	4	-
Groups	5	5	5	-
Participants	50	49	20	30
Rounds	15	15	30	30

SL: Social Learning; IDM: Individual Decision Making. In SL2 there are 49 subjects since one session was run with 9 participants rather than 10 due to a last minute unavailability of one subject.

4 Results

Our main objective is to understand how human subjects learn from the observation of their predecessors' choices (social learning). To this purpose we first focus on the first action taken by subjects at any time $t > 1$ (denoted by a_t^1). We will later study how subjects learn from

in subjects' updating after observing the signal, and adding more heterogeneity in precisions would have just made the experiment computationally more demanding for the subjects (and with less possibilities of learning).

[16] This treatment was conducted in the fall 2014. The payment followed the same rules. The exchange rate was appropriately modified so that, in expectation, subjects could receive a similar amount of money per hour spent in the laboratory.

their own signal together with social learning, by focusing on their second action at any time t (denoted by a_t^2). Note that we use the notation a_t^2 for mnemonic purposes; a_t^2 coincides with a_t, as defined in Section 2 for the theoretical models (since in that section we only considered the theoretical action after observing the predecessors and the own signal).

4.1 Inferring Others' Signals

Let us start by considering how the first action chosen by a subject at time $t > 1$ (a_t^1) is influenced by the signals received by the subject's predecessors. Of course, the subject does not observe these signals, but he does observe the actions the predecessors have chosen upon receiving these signals. The first four propositions in Section 2 give very different predictions on how these signals are weighted. According to the PBE, each signal is correctly inferred and given an equal weight of 1. According to the redundancy of information neglect model, early signals have a much higher weight. According to the OC model, the weights are all equal but lower than 1. To test these different predictions, we run a regression analysis, focusing on the first action at each time. Using the first action has the advantage that we do not need extra assumptions on how subjects update upon receiving their private signal.[17]We use median regressions throughout the analysis.

Specifically, for each period $t = 2, 3, \ldots, 10$, we regress the loglikelihood ratio of a_t^1 on all the predecessors' signal likelihood ratios:

$$\ln\left(\frac{a_t^1}{100 - a_t^1}\right) = \beta_{t,1} \ln\left(\frac{q_1}{1-q_1}\right)^{2s_1-1} + \beta_{t,2} \ln\left(\frac{q_2}{1-q_2}\right)^{2s_2-1} + \ldots$$
$$+ \beta_{t,t-1} \ln\left(\frac{q_{t-1}}{1-q_{t-1}}\right)^{2s_{t-1}-1} + \varepsilon_t^1, \tag{1}$$

with $Med(\varepsilon_t^1 | s_1, s_2, ..., s_{t-1}) = 0$. Each coefficient $\beta_{t,i}$ is the weight given by the median agent t to signal s_i ($i < t$). Subjects in the experiment sometimes choose the extreme values 0 and 100; for the dependent variable to be well defined in these cases, we rewrite $a_t^1 = 100$ as $a_t^1 = 100 - 0.1$ and $a_t^1 = 0$ as $a_t^1 = 0.1$. Clearly, the choice of 0.1 is arbitrary. This choice, however, does not affect the median of the distribution as far as the proportion of the boundary actions is less than 1/2. In other words, we use a median regression rather than a linear regression, since the results of the latter are sensitive to extremely large or small values of the dependent variable and, hence, to how extreme values of the action are treated in the analysis.

[17]To give an example, suppose subjects, after observing others' actions, make inferences as in BRTNI. After receiving the own signal, though, they totally neglect the information coming from others' actions and only use the information contained in their own signal. If we had elicited the belief only once, after the subjects receive the private signal, we would conclude that subjects only use their signals and would be unable to observe this type of inference. We discuss this issue in greater detail in Section 4.3.

Given the experimental design, we have 300 observations for $t = 2, 3, 4$; 150 observations for $t = 5, \ldots, 9$; and 135 for $t = 10$.[18] To account for unobserved correlations among subjects within each session, we compute bootstrap standard errors (using 500 replications) clustering at the session level (Hahn, 1995).

Figure 1 shows the estimated coefficients $\widehat{\beta}_{t,i}$, and their 95% confidence intervals. The estimated coefficients are systematically below 1, and do not exhibit any tendency to decrease from early to late periods. As shown in Table 2, the null hypothesis that the weights are equal to 1 (as in the PBE) is rejected at conventional significance levels. We find even stronger evidence against the hypothesis that the $\beta_{t,i}$ coefficients take values according to the BRTNI and the ABEE predictions. On the other hand, the null hypothesis that weights are constant across periods is never rejected at the 5% significance level. These results reject the PBE as well as the redundancy of information neglect model predictions. Instead, they do not falsify the OC model.

We estimate the "degree of overconfidence" k, under the hypothesis that at any time t the weight is constant for all signals 1, 2, $t-1$, as predicted by the OC model. Table 3 reports the results. Estimates are significantly lower than 1 for all periods, approximately between 0.4 and 0.6. Note that our theoretical OC model imposes a further restriction, that is, that the parameter k is the same across periods. When we impose the further restriction that the parameter k is the same across periods, we obtain an estimate of 0.49 (last row of Table 3). Hence, subjects put on a predecessor's signal approximately half the weight that a Bayesian agent would put on a signal he would directly observe. Testing the null hypothesis that the parameters k are all equal across periods gives a p-value of 0.09, that is we cannot reject the hypothesis that the parameters are equal (at 5%). It is rather remarkable that the degree of overconfidence remains constant over time. One may suspect that the inference problem becomes more complicated for later decision makers in the sequence, and that, as a consequence, subjects attribute a lower information content to later predecessors' actions. This is not what the experimental data indicate. Perhaps, subjects just form an expectation on how signals are reflected in each action and attribute it to all the actions they observe.

So far we have estimated equation (1) and the parameter k using all predecessors' signals. One could observe that in some cases subjects did not have a chance to infer the signal from the action. Consider, for instance, a subject in period 2 who observed $a_1 = 50$. Since the belief stated by subject 1 is identical to the prior, it was impossible to infer his signal.[19]

[18] Recall that in one the session we had 9 rather than 10 subjects due to a last minute no show up by one subject.

[19] This is true even looking at the frequencies. Empirically, the choice of action 50 in period 1 was only slightly more frequent upon receiving a bad signal than a good one. Knowing these frequencies, the posterior belief upon observing action 50 at time 1 would have been 0.54.

Table 2: Hypothesis Testing: Weights on Predecessors' Signals (p-values)
Dependent Variable: Action 1 (loglikelihood ratio)

	H_0^{PBE}: $\beta_{t,1} = \cdots = \beta_{t,t-1} = 1$	H_0^{BRTNI}: $\beta_{t,i} = 2^{t-i-1}\ \forall i = 1, \ldots, t-1$
Period 2	0.035	0.035
Period 3	0.000	0.000
Period 4	0.023	0.000
Period 5	0.000	0.000
Period 6	0.000	0.000
Period 7	0.000	0.000
Period 8	0.000	0.000
Period 9	0.000	0.000
Period 10	0.003	0.000
	H_0^{ABEE}: $\beta_{t,i} = t - i\ \forall i = 1, \ldots, t-1$	H_0^{OC}: $\beta_{t,1} = \cdots = \beta_{t,t-1}$
Period 2	0.035	.
Period 3	0.000	0.871
Period 4	0.000	0.098
Period 5	0.000	0.986
Period 6	0.000	0.857
Period 7	0.000	0.805
Period 8	0.000	0.830
Period 9	0.000	0.921
Period 10	0.000	0.262

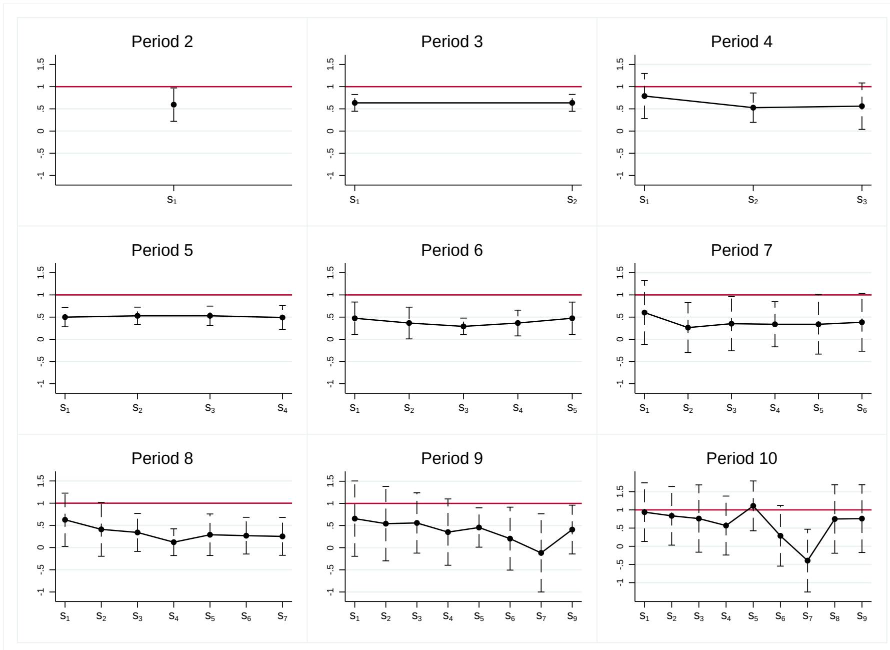
The table reports tests based on bootstrap standard errors (500 replications), clustering at the session level.

Table 3: Median Regressions of Action 1 on Predecessors' Signals:
Estimation of k under $H_0^{OC}: \beta_{t,1} = \cdots = \beta_{t,t-1}$

	$\hat{k}$	95% Confidence Interval lower limit	upper limit
Period 2	0.653	0.261	0.975
Period 3	0.635	0.508	0.874
Period 4	0.674	0.503	0.997
Period 5	0.504	0.332	0.664
Period 6	0.416	0.142	0.706
Period 7	0.404	0.180	0.648
Period 8	0.358	0.200	0.554
Period 9	0.381	0.257	0.649
Period 10	0.489	0.301	0.997
All	0.488	0.327	0.706

The table reports 95% confidence intervals obtained with bootstrap (500 replications), clustering at the session level.

Figure 1: Median Regressions of Action 1 on Predecessors' Signals (Estimated Weights)



The figure shows the estimated coefficients from a median regression of first action loglikelihood ratios on predecessors' signal loglikelihood ratios. For each period $t = 1, \ldots, 10$, predecessors' signals, $s_i, i = 1, \ldots, t-1$, are on the x-axis; corresponding point estimates and 95% confidence intervals are on the y-axis, represented by black dots and dashed capped lines, respectively. Confidence intervals are computed by bootstrap (500 replications), clustering at the session level.

To tackle this issue and check the robustness of our findings, we repeat our entire analysis after excluding the cases in which an action was, presumably, uninformative. For instance, we exclude the cases in which $a_1 = 50$ and $a_t^2 = a_{t-1}^2$ for $t \geq 2$. The results do not change compared to the present ones. We refer the reader to Appendix C, where we discuss the precise methodology adopted and report the corresponding results.

4.2 Inferring Others' Signals: A Heuristic Approach

The previous results suggest that the data from the laboratory are consistent with the OC model. One may wonder how subjects whose way of reasoning is similar to that of the OC model infer signals from actions. The question is relevant, since in the previous analysis we used the true signal realizations, which are observed by us but not by the subjects themselves.

While in the laboratory there is noise, it seems natural to think that if the OC model well represents subject's way of thinking, subjects reconstructed the sequence of signals by

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing: Weights on Predecessors' Signals (p-values)
Dependent Variable: Action 1 (loglikelihood ratio)
Predecessors' Signals Inferred Heuristically

	H_0^{OC} : $\beta_{t,1} = \cdots = \beta_{t,t-1}$
Period 2	.
Period 3	0.605
Period 4	0.558
Period 5	0.999
Period 6	0.372
Period 7	0.673
Period 8	0.451
Period 9	0.152
Period 10	0.904

The table reports tests based on bootstrap standard errors (500 replications), clustering at the session level.

inferring a signal $s_i = 0$ $(= 1)$ whenever the observed action a_i^2 was closer to the theoretical action a_i^{OC} conditional on a signal 0 (1) than to the theoretical action a_i^{OC} conditional on a signal 1 (0). If that were the case, is it still true that the OC model is consistent with the data? To test this hypothesis, we now repeat the regression in equation (1) by substituting the true signal realizations with the signals constructed according to this heuristic, using the estimated value of the "degree of overconfidence" $k = 0.488$.[20] Figure 2 and Table 4 report the results.

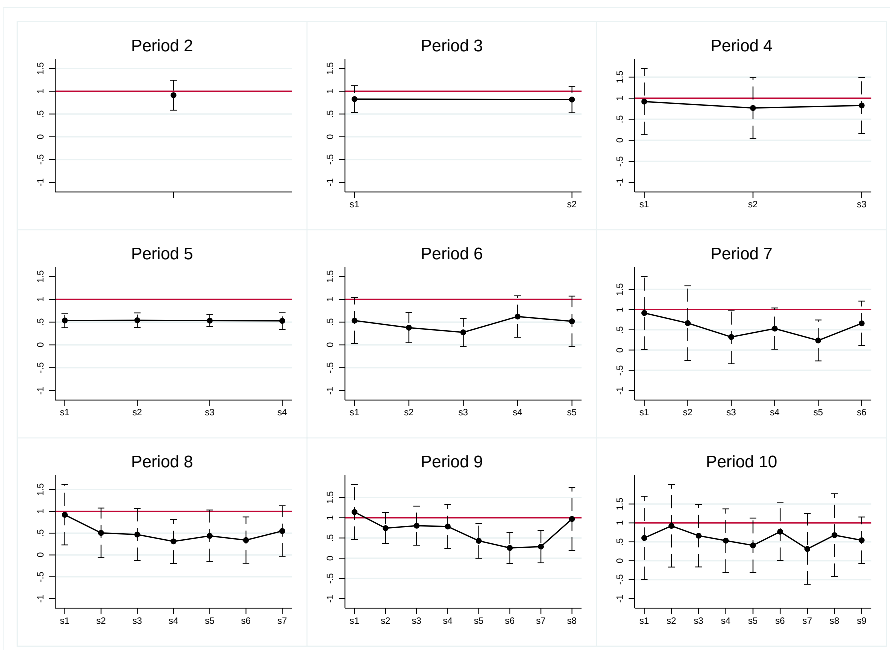
As one can observe from Table 4, again the OC model is not rejected by the data. Figure 2, while not perfectly identical to Figure 1, still indicates that for most periods the weight on the predecessors' signals is systematically lower than 1. We will come back to the relation between a subject's action and the predecessors' actions. For the time being, we notice that this heuristic lends more credibility to the fact that the OC model well summarizes subjects' behavior in the laboratory, since this model is not rejected by the data even when we reconstruct the signals on the basis of the model itself.

4.3 Inferring Others' Signals and Learning from the Own Signal

While the previous results are compatible with the OC model, we still have to verify how subjects update their belief upon receiving their own signal. Recall that according to the

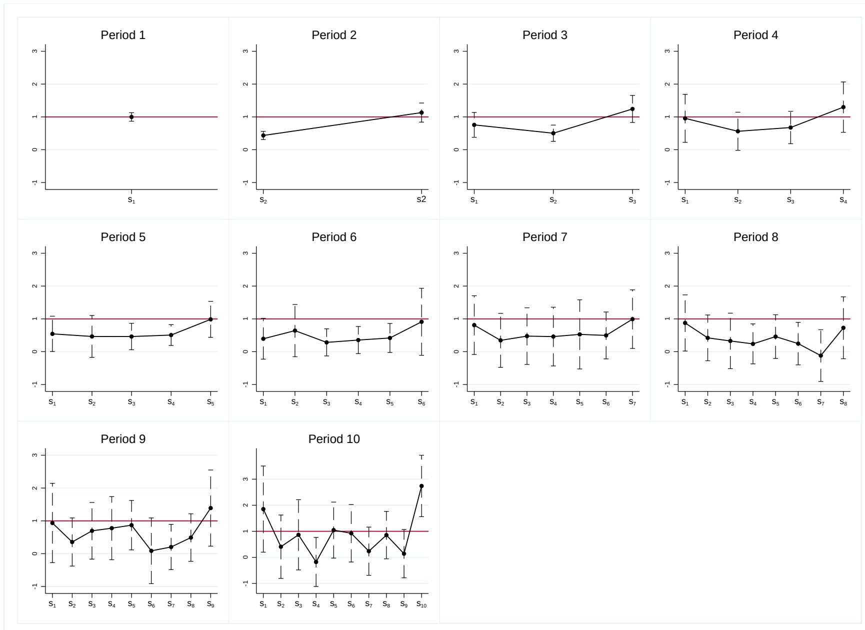
[20] In Section 4.5 we study how subjects' actions are related to predecessors' actions rather than signals. In this case, we estimate a "degree of overconfidence" $k = 0.320$. The results presented in Figure 2 and Table 4 remain essentially unchanged when we use the estimate $k = 0.320$.

Figure 2: Median Regressions of Action 1 on Predecessors' Signals: A Heuristic Approach (Estimated Weights)



The figure shows the estimated coefficients from a median regression of first action loglikelihood ratios on predecessors' signal loglikelihood ratios. For each period $t = 1, \ldots, 9$, a predecessor's signal is s_i if $\left|a_i^2 - a_i^{OC}(s_i)\right| < \left|a_i^2 - a_i^{OC}(1-s_i)\right|$ or $1 - s_i$ if $\left|a_i^2 - a_i^{OC}(s_i)\right| > \left|a_i^2 - a_i^{OC}(1-s_i)\right|$, where $a_i^{OC}(s_i)$ is the theoretical action a_i^{OC} conditional on the realization of the signal. For each period $t = 1, \ldots, 10$, predecessors' signals, $s_i, i = 1, \ldots, t-1$, are on the x-axis; corresponding point estimates and 95% confidence intervals are on the y-axis, represented by black dots and dashed capped lines, respectively. Confidence intervals are computed by bootstrap (500 replications), clustering at the session level.

Figure 3: Median Regressions of Action 2 on Own and Predecessors' Signals (Estimated Weights)



The figure shows the estimated coefficients from a median regression of second action loglikelihood ratios on own and predecessors' signal loglikelihood ratios. For each period $t = 1, \ldots, 10$, predecessors' signals, $s_i, i = 1, \ldots, t-1$, and own signal, s_t, are on the x-axis; corresponding point estimates and 95% confidence intervals are on the y-axis, represented by black dots and dashed capped lines, respectively. Confidence intervals are computed by bootstrap (500 replications), clustering at the session level.

OC model, agents, whereas attributing a lower weight to the predecessors' signals, weigh their own signal correctly. To investigate this issue, we now study how subjects chose their second action, a_t^2. Specifically, for each period $t = 2, 3, \ldots, 10$, we regress the loglikelihood ratio of a_t^2 on all the predecessors' signal likelihood ratios and on the own signal likelihood ratio:

$$\ln\left(\frac{a_t^2}{100 - a_t^2}\right) = \beta_{t,1} \ln\left(\frac{q_1}{1-q_1}\right)^{2s_1-1} + \beta_{t,2} \ln\left(\frac{q_2}{1-q_2}\right)^{2s_2-1} + \ldots$$
$$+ \beta_{t,t-1} \ln\left(\frac{q_{t-1}}{1-q_{t-1}}\right)^{2s_{t-1}-1} + \beta_{t,t} \ln\left(\frac{q_t}{1-q_t}\right)^{2s_t-1} + \varepsilon_t^2. \tag{2}$$

As one can see from Figure 3, for each period t, the weight on the own signal is very close to 1 (and statistically not different from 1), with the only exception of period 10, for which it is actually higher than 1. The results of the hypothesis testing reported in Table 5 reveal that the predictions of the PBE, BRTNI and ABEE are again strongly rejected by the data — with the trivial exception of period 1, in which there is no social learning, and that of period 7 for the PBE, which, in the absence of a clear pattern, may well be attributed to chance. We find, instead, support for the predictions of the OC model, which are not rejected by the data at any period, except for period 10. In view of the results presented in Table 3 for the weights on predecessors' signals, the rejection of the OC model in period 10 is presumably due to the weight on the own signal being even higher than 1.

In the interest of space, we do not report the "degree of overconfidence" k estimated using action 2. We simply note that the results are in line with those in Table 3 obtained using action 1. In particular, when we impose the restriction that the parameter k is the same across periods, we obtain an estimated value of 0.57.

An interesting and important question is whether the weight given by subjects to predecessors' signals is the same before and after observing their own signal. To answer this question, we test whether the coefficients of the regression equations (1) and (2) are the same. That is, for each turn we estimate the median regressions (1) and (2) and then test whether pair-wise differences between coefficients on predecessors' signals across the two regressions are statistically different from zero. Again we adopt a bootstrap procedure with standard errors clustered at the session level. We find strong evidence in favor of the null, which is never rejected for any pair of coefficients across turns.

Under the assumption (backed by the data) that the median regression coefficients in equations (1) and (2) are the same, subtracting (2) from (1) gives

$$\ln\left(\frac{a_t^2}{100-a_t^2}\right)-\ln\left(\frac{a_t^1}{100-a_t^1}\right)=\beta_{t,t}\ln\left(\frac{q_t}{1-q_t}\right)^{2s_t-1}+\varepsilon_t^2-\varepsilon_t^1.$$

If $\varepsilon_t^2-\varepsilon_t^1$ is median zero conditional on $(s_1,\ldots,s_t)$ — a sufficient condition for it is that ε_t^1 and ε_t^2 are i.i.d., symmetrically and unimodally distributed around zero — then the median regression of the update from the first to the second belief depends only on the current signal and not on the past signals. We have tested this implication by regressing the difference between the loglikelihood ratio of a_t^2 and the loglikelihood ratio of a_t^1 on predecessors' and own signal likelihood ratios. We find that the weight on the own signal is very close to 1 and not statistically different from 1 across turns (except for turn 9, where the estimated coefficient is 0.54 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.20 to 0.87). Importantly, the weights on predecessors' signals are small in magnitudes and rarely statistically different from zero. Overall, predecessors' signals have no predictive power for the update from action 1 to action 2, as the joint null hypothesis that all coefficients on predecessors' signal are zero is not rejected. The only exceptions are turn 5 and turn 9. In both cases, however, while we reject the hypothesis that predecessors' signals have no explanatory power, the estimated

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing: Weights on Own and Predecessors' Signals (p-values)
Dependent Variable: Action 2 (loglikelihood ratio)

	H_0^{PBE} : $\beta_{t,1} = \cdots = \beta_{t,t} = 1$	H_0^{BRTNI} : $\beta_{t,i} = 2^{t-i-1}\ \forall i = 1, \ldots, t-1,$ $\beta_{t,t} = 1$
Period 1	0.977	0.977
Period 2	0.000	0.000
Period 3	0.000	0.000
Period 4	0.040	0.000
Period 5	0.006	0.000
Period 6	0.000	0.000
Period 7	0.301	0.000
Period 8	0.000	0.000
Period 9	0.000	0.000
Period 10	0.000	0.000
	H_0^{ABEE} : $\beta_{t,i} = t - i\ \forall i = 1, \ldots, t-1,$ $\beta_{t,t} = 1$	H_0^{OC} : $\beta_{t,1} = \cdots = \beta_{t,t-1},$ $\beta_{t,t} = 1$
Period 1	0.977	0.977
Period 2	0.000	0.376†
Period 3	0.000	0.414
Period 4	0.000	0.584
Period 5	0.000	0.994
Period 6	0.000	0.940
Period 7	0.000	0.941
Period 8	0.000	0.232
Period 9	0.000	0.887
Period 10	0.000	0.004

The table reports tests based on bootstrap standard errors (500 replications), clustering at the session level. †: the reported p-value refers to the null hypothesis that $\beta_{2,2} = 1$, while $\beta_{2,1}$ can take any value. We also compute the value of $\beta_{2,1}$ that minimizes the quantile regression criterion function, under the constraint that $\beta_{2,2} = 1$. We obtain a value of $\beta_{2,1} = 0.476$ with a bootstrap 95% confidence interval of $[0.322, 0.630]$.

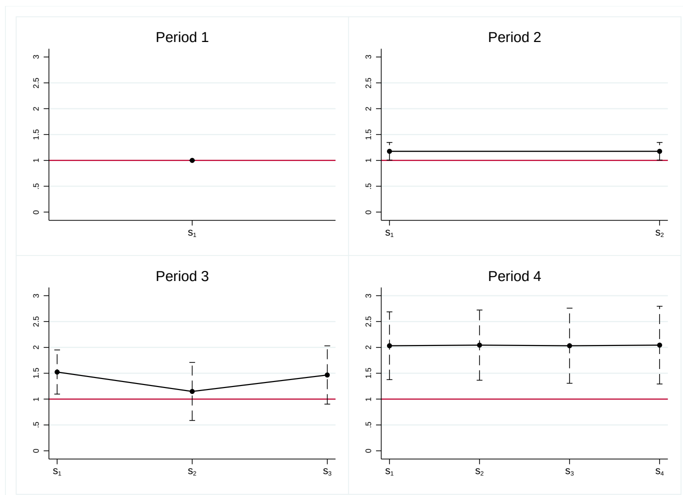
coefficients appear relatively small in value.

In summary, our analyses show that the median subject puts the correct weight of 1 on his own signal and approximately half the weight on his predecessors' signals.[21]

4.4 A Control: Inferring from a Sequence of Signals

In our experiment, the private signal also happens to be the latest piece of information subjects receive before making their decision. One may wonder whether a tendency of human subjects to put more weight on the most recent piece of information, could explain (or, at least, affect) our results. It could be that, independently of social learning, subjects put more weight on the latest signal, compared to previous information.

Figure 4: Median Regressions of Action on Own Signals in IDM Treatment (Estimated Weights)



The figure shows the estimated coefficients from a median regression of subjects' action loglikelihood ratios on own signal loglikelihood ratios. For each period $t = 1, 2, 3, 4$, own signals, s_t, are on the x-axis; corresponding point estimates and 95% confidence intervals are on the y-axis, represented by black dots and dashed capped lines, respectively. Confidence intervals are computed by bootstrap (500 replications), clustering at the session level.

To check for this possibility and, more generally, for deviation from equilibrium due to behavioral departures from Bayesian updating, we ran a treatment in which subjects observed directly a sequence of signals (IDM treatment). Figure 4 shows the results. Subjects put

[21] One may think that by eliciting beliefs twice, we make subjects pay more attention to the information content of the predecessors' actions. Also psychological biases such as the confirmation bias may induce subjects to discount the own signal, received only after forming a belief by observing others. If this were the case, our experimental design would over-estimate the weight put on the predecessors' actions, that is, bias the results against the OC model.

the same weight on all signals, a result which holds at any period. While the weight is not significantly different from 1 for the first three periods, it is significantly higher in period 4 (the p-value for the hypothesis that all weights are equal to 1 in period 4 is 0.00). The result is, however, affected by subjects choosing extreme actions (0 or 100) after four signals of the same color. If we exclude these cases, the weights are again not significantly different from 1 (p-value of 0.30).

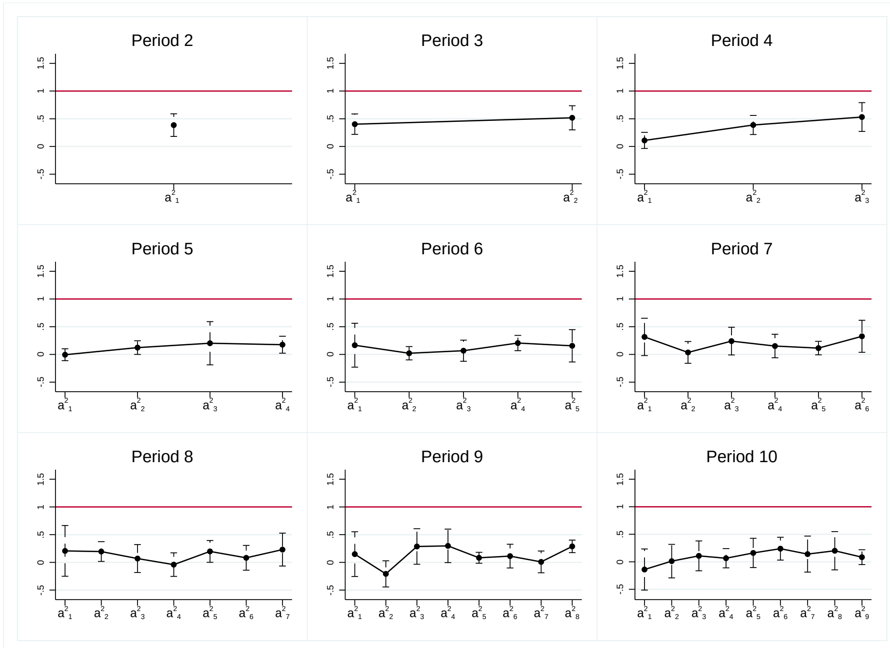
Overall, the results of this treatment confirm that our findings in the SL treatment are indeed related to how they learn from the actions of others, and not to subjective beliefs on signal precisions or to behavioral departures from Bayesian updating (which would emerge even when subjects directly receive information rather than having to infer it from others' actions).

4.5 Social Learning

In Section 4.1 we have offered a direct test of our first four theoretical propositions. In Section 4.2 we have proposed a heuristic for inferring signals from actions consistent with the OC model and shown that it lends further support to the results previously obtained. Now, we take one more step and study how subject t's action is related not to his predecessors' signals (true or as inferred through a heuristic), but to his predecessors' actions. There are various reasons to do this. First, the predecessors' actions is what a subject actually observes. Second, this analysis can reveal a behavior not detectable by focusing on signals. As an example, suppose subject 4 forms expectations as in the PBE, and chooses the action as in the PBE. Suppose he observes a sequence of actions $70, 83, 70$. He then chooses 70, which is consistent with the PBE. If, however, subject 3 had received the good signal and not the bad signal (and not used his signal as in the PBE), by studying the relation between actions and predecessors' signals we would not classify subject 4's action as PBE.[22] For PBE and BRTNI this analysis offers a more immediate test of the theories, since the PBE predicts that only the immediate predecessor's action matter ($a_t^2 = a_{t-1}^2$), and BRTNI predicts that subjects take actions as signals. Essentially, focusing on the signals is equivalent to a joint test: a test that subjects form expectations from predecessors' actions as the theoretical models predict, and that predecessors use their own signals as the models predict. By studying the relation between an action and the predecessors' actions, instead, we do not need to rely on assumptions or heuristics on how subjects relate predecessors' actions to their signals. This

[22] Of course, there is a merit in studying the relation with signals, as we did before. Consider the case in which the first three signals are all good and the sequence of actions is $70, 99, 93$. Subject 4 could infer that all three signals were good (the third subject corrected the overreaction by subject 2) and act as in a PBE. The PBE prediction would not be falsified by considering the relation between an actions and the predecessors' signals, whereas it would be by considering that between an action and the predecessors' actions.

Figure 5: Median Regressions of Action 1 on Predecessors' Action 2 (Estimated Weights)



The figure shows the estimated coefficients from a median regression of first action log-likelihood ratios on predecessors' second action loglikelihood ratios. For each period $t = 1, \ldots, 10$, predecessors' actions, $a_i^2, i = 1, \ldots, t-1$, are on the x-axis; corresponding point estimates and 95% confidence intervals are on the y-axis, represented by black dots and dashed capped lines, respectively. Confidence intervals are computed by bootstrap (500 replications), clustering at the session level.

analysis offers a test of the predictions described in Proposition 5.

Recall, that in the PBE only the immediate predecessor's action is relevant for the choice of action a_t^1 (all other actions have zero weight). According to BRTNI, instead, all previous actions have an equal weight of 1. The OC model predicts a specific relation between the action taken at time t and the predecessors' actions, with early actions having less weight than late ones.

To test these predictions, we estimate the following regression equations:

$$\ln\left(\frac{a_t^1}{100-a_t^1}\right) = \gamma_{t,1}\ln\left(\frac{a_1^2}{100-a_1^2}\right) + \gamma_{t,2}\ln\left(\frac{a_2^2}{100-a_2^2}\right) + \ldots + \gamma_{t,t-1}\ln\left(\frac{a_{t-1}^2}{100-a_{t-1}^2}\right) + \varepsilon_t^1. \quad (3)$$

Table 6: Hypothesis Testing: Weights on Predecessors' Action 2 (p-values)
Dependent Variable: Action 1 (loglikelihood ratio)

	H_0^{PBE}: $\gamma_{t,1} = \cdots = \gamma_{t,t-2} = 0$, $\gamma_{t,t-1} = 1$	H_0^{BRTNI}: $\gamma_{t,1} = \cdots = \gamma_{t,t-1} = 1$
Period 2	0.000	0.000
Period 3	0.000	0.000
Period 4	0.000	0.000
Period 5	0.000	0.000
Period 6	0.000	0.000
Period 7	0.000	0.000
Period 8	0.000	0.000
Period 9	0.000	0.000
Period 10	0.000	0.000
	H_0^{ABEE}: $\gamma_{t,i} = sign(\sin(\frac{t-i}{3}\pi))$ $\forall i = 1, \ldots, t-1$	H_0^{OC}: $\gamma_{t,i} = \gamma_{t-1}(1-\gamma_{t-1})^{t-i-1}$ $\forall i = 1, \ldots, t-1$
Period 2	0.000	.
Period 3	0.000	0.111
Period 4	0.000	0.251
Period 5	0.000	0.234
Period 6	0.000	0.523
Period 7	0.000	0.134
Period 8	0.000	0.867
Period 9	0.000	0.028
Period 10	0.000	0.591

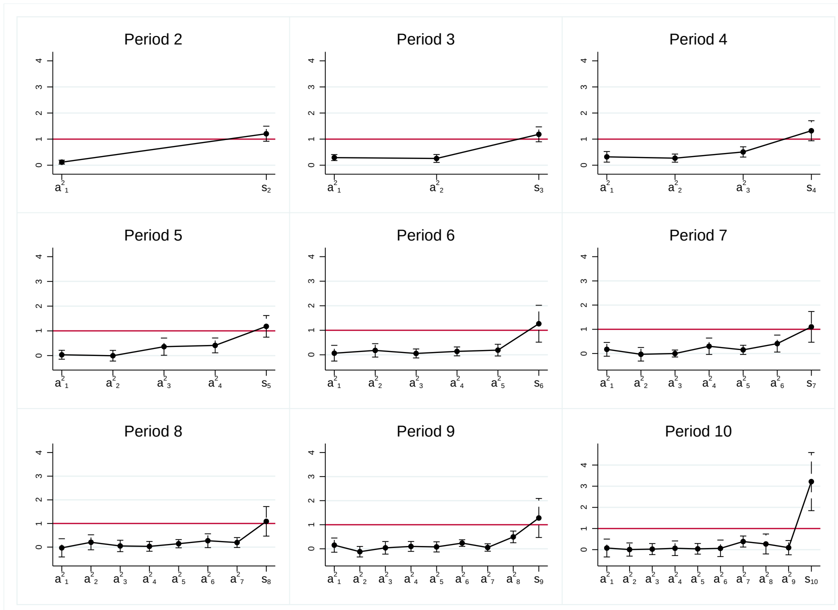
The table reports tests based on bootstrap standard errors (500 replications), clustering at the session level.

$$\ln\left(\frac{a_t^1}{100-a_t^1}\right) = \gamma_{t,1}\ln\left(\frac{a_1^2}{100-a_1^2}\right) + \gamma_{t,2}\ln\left(\frac{a_2^2}{100-a_2^2}\right) + \ldots$$
$$+ \gamma_{t,t-1}\ln\left(\frac{a_{t-1}^2}{100-a_{t-1}^2}\right) + \gamma_{t,t}\ln\left(\frac{q_t}{1-q_t}\right)^{2s_t-1} + \varepsilon_t^1. \quad (4)$$

Note that for the right-hand-side variables, we approximate $a_t^2 = 100$ as $a_t^2 = 100 - 0.1$ and $a_t^2 = 0$ as $a_t^2 = 0.1$ (the same approximation remains true for the dependent variable, as explained in the previous subsection).

The results of the estimation of equation (3) are shown in Figure 5 and Tables 6-7. They confirm our previous findings: while the data are at odds with the PBE, the BRTNI and the ABEE, they support the predictions of the OC model. Specifically, the estimated coefficients on the predecessors' actions exhibit a somewhat increasing pattern, as suggested by the OC

Figure 6: Median Regressions of Action 2 on Predecessors' Action 2 and Own Signal (Estimated Weights)



The figure shows the estimated coefficients from a median regression of second action loglikelihood ratios on predecessors' second action loglikelihood ratios and own signal loglikelihood ratios. For each period $t = 1, \ldots, 10$, predecessors' actions, $a_i^2, i = 1, \ldots, t-1$, and own signal, s_t, are on the x-axis; corresponding point estimates and 95% confidence intervals are on the y-axis, represented by black dots and dashed capped lines, respectively. Confidence intervals are computed by bootstrap (500 replications), clustering at the session level.

model, which is more marked in periods $2-5$. The estimates of the k parameter are again lower than 1 and actually typically lower than the estimates from the regressions of actions on predecessors' signals, although for most periods, and overall (when we assume that k is constant across periods), the estimates obtained from the two different regressions are not statistically different from each other.[23]

Finally, in Figure 6 and Table 8 we report the results of the estimation of equation (4). Once again, the data are in contrast with the PBE, the BRTNI and the ABEE, but not with the OC model.[24] This model is never rejected, except for period 10, presumably because the estimated coefficient on the own signal takes a larger value than 1.

[23] In the case of constant k, the p-value is 0.08.

[24] It is worth mentioning that whereas in the social learning literature, as in much psychological literature, researchers have talked about "overnconfidence," in other experimental studies subjects show "underconfidence." In particular, in experiments on decision making with naive advice, it has been observed that "when given a choice between getting advice or the information upon which the advice is based, subjects tend to opt for the advice, indicating a kind of underconfidence in their decision making abilities [...]" (Schotter, 2003). Our result is in favour of overconfidence and at odds with underconfidence.

Table 7: Median Regressions of Action 1 on Predecessors' Action 2: Estimation of k under $H_0^{OC}: \gamma_{t,i} = \gamma_{t-1}(1-\gamma_{t-1})^{t-i-1}\ \forall i = 1,\ldots,t-1$

	$\hat{k}$	95% Confidence Interval lower limit	upper limit
Period 3	0.469	0.204	0.598
Period 4	0.580	0.248	0.840
Period 5	0.154	0.127	0.394
Period 6	0.154	0.077	0.801
Period 7	0.248	0.104	0.717
Period 8	0.180	0.083	0.745
Period 9	0.324	0.102	0.430
Period 10	0.211	0.132	0.336
All	0.320	0.156	0.526

The table reports 95% confidence intervals obtained with bootstrap (500 replications), clustering at the session level.

4.6 Efficiency and Convergence

At last, we want to study the consequences of the observed behavior in the laboratory in terms of learning (in)efficiency. The PBE offers a benchmark for efficient learning: in the PBE, each agent perfectly infers the signals from the predecessors' action and uses the information to choose the optimal action. The private information is aggregated and, eventually, agents learn the true value of the good almost surely. In the other theoretical models we have presented, in contrast, there are inefficiencies, due to the incorrect beliefs agents form. Asymptotic convergence to the realized value occurs in the other theoretical models, with the exception of BRTNI, where, given the extreme overweight of early actions, beliefs can converge to the incorrect value of the good (Eyster and Rabin, 2010). While in our experiment, with sequences of 4 or 10 signals, we cannot study asymptotic convergence to the realized value, still we can compare the stated beliefs with the PBE ones. We proceed in two ways. First, to study efficiency, we compare, period by period, the realized average payoffs with the expected theoretical payoffs under PBE. Second, we look at the distance between stated and PBE beliefs at the end of the sequence of decision making (i.e., period 4 in treatment SL3 and period 10 in treatments SL1 and SL2).

Figure 7 reports the average realized per-period payoff as a ratio of the average payoff subjects would have obtained, had they played as in the PBE.[25] In round 1, subjects earn 96% of what is potentially obtainable. Over rounds, this percentage declines but only slightly, to over around 90% in the final periods of the experiment. The figure also reports the ratio

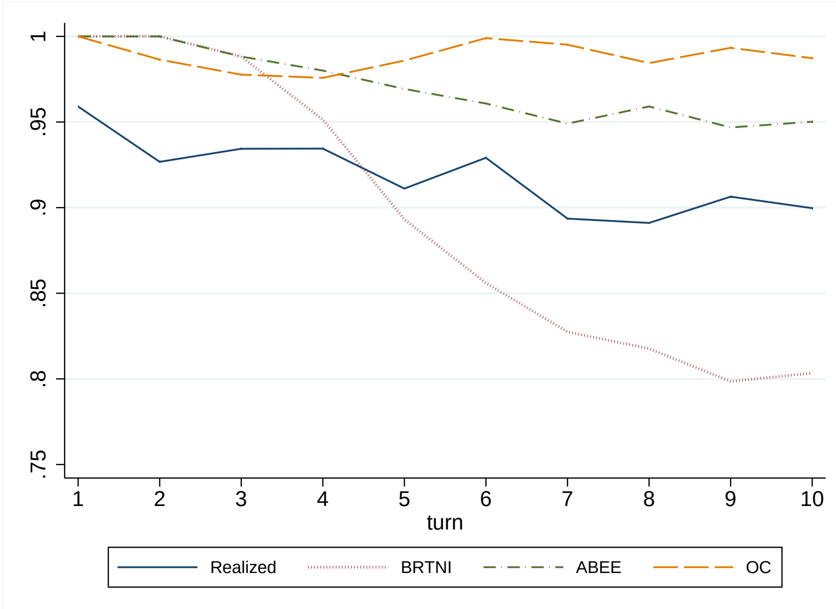
[25]In toehr words, for each period t, the PBE payoff is computed as $100 - 0.01\left(V - a_{ti}^{PBE}\right)^2$ for each observation i and averaging across all observations.

Table 8: Hypothesis Testing: Weights on Predecessors' Action 2 and Own Signal (p-values)
Dependent Variable: Action 2 (loglikelihood ratio)

	H_0^{PBE} : $\gamma_{t,1} = \cdots = \gamma_{t,t-2} = 0,$ $\gamma_{t,t-1} = 1$ $\beta_{t,t} = 1$	H_0^{BRTNI} : $\gamma_{t,1} = \cdots = \gamma_{t,t-1} = 1$ $\beta_{t,t} = 1$
Period 2	0.000	0.000
Period 3	0.000	0.000
Period 4	0.000	0.000
Period 5	0.002	0.000
Period 6	0.000	0.000
Period 7	0.016	0.000
Period 8	0.000	0.000
Period 9	0.000	0.000
Period 10	0.000	0.000
	H_0^{ABEE} : $\gamma_{t,i} = sign(\sin(\frac{t-i}{3}\pi))$ $\forall i = 1, \ldots, t-1$ $\beta_{t,t} = 1$	H_0^{OC} : $\gamma_{t,i} = \gamma_{t-1}(1-\gamma_{t-1})^{t-i-1}$ $\forall i = 1, \ldots, t-1$ $\beta_{t,t} = 1$
Period 2	0.000	.
Period 3	0.000	0.170
Period 4	0.000	0.143
Period 5	0.000	0.402
Period 6	0.000	0.944
Period 7	0.000	0.477
Period 8	0.000	0.862
Period 9	0.000	0.164
Period 10	0.000	0.017

The table reports tests based on bootstrap standard errors (500 replications), clustering at the session level.

Figure 7: Ratio of Average Payoff to Average PBE Payoff



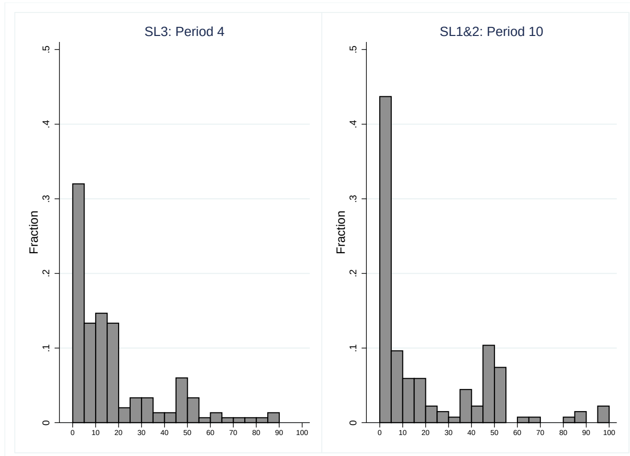
To compute payoffs under the OC model, we assume a value of the overconfidence k parameter equal to 0.488 (last row in Table 3).

between the average OC, ABEE and BRTNI payoffs and the average PBE payoffs.[26] Note that the OC model predicts a slightly higher efficiency than the realized one. This is true even at time 1, however, when, according to the model learning is fully efficient (since the inference from the signal is always correct). Although, as we have seen, the median action at time 1 is in line with the PBE (and so is efficient), there is heterogeneity in the actions, and this determines the loss in efficiency (as highlighted by the realized payoffs). This loss is approximately constant over periods, as one can notice by comparing the blue solid line and the orange dashed line. In other words, once we take into account this loss of efficiency due to the heterogenous use of the own signal, the OC model predicts the inefficiency in the data remarkably well. The BRTNI model, instead, predicts a marked reduction in efficiency (red dotted line) that we do not observe in the data.

Figure 8 reports the histogram of the distance between stated beliefs (as measured by a_t^2) and PBE beliefs in the last period of decision making (i.e., period 4 in SL3 and period 10 in SL1 and SL2). The distance is computed as the absolute value of the difference between the two beliefs. A distance lower than 5 occurred in 33% of the cases in period 4 (SL3) and in 44% of the cases in period 10 (SL1 and SL2), indicating also a process of convergence over time. Overall, while the underweight of the predecessors' signals poses a limit to a perfect

[26] The average theoretical payoffs are computed analogously to what explained in the previous footnote for the PBE. For the OC model, we used the estimated value $k = 0.320$.

Figure 8: Distance between Stated and PBE Beliefs



convergence, the cases in which the inference is strongly incorrect are few, as shown by the low occurrence of instances in which the distance is higher than 50.

5 Discussion and Conclusions

To conclude, it is worth discussing some aspects of our experiment and our results.

First, our OC model assumes the overconfidence parameter k to be common knowledge among players. Such assumption, while strong, is shared by a number of other papers, for example about bargaining (see, Yildiz, 2003, 2011). Other assumptions would sound plausible as well, for example allowing the k parameter to be heterogeneous among agents or allowing agents to entertain subjective beliefs about the ability of others to correctly observe (or interpret) the actions of their predecessors. The main rationales for our OC specification are that the model is simple (it depends on just one parameter, k) and it explains the data well.

Second, as we pointed out in Section 2, our OC model describes agents who are overconfident in a relative form: they believe they have a higher ability to understand the private signal (or to act upon it) than their predecessors. An alternative definition of overconfidence is in absolute value, that is, the agent is overconfident in his own signal, attributing to it a precision higher than the objective one. The results of our experiments support relative overconfidence and not overconfidence in the own signal. The clearest evidence that overconfidence in the own signal is rejected is at time 1, since the subject only observes his signal and does not have to weigh his signal relative to other information: as we have shown in Figure 2, the estimated coefficient for time 1 is 1, indicating that the median action is perfectly in line with the Bayesian one (and there is no overconfidence). The estimated coefficients at later periods confirm this finding.

Third, our OC model shares some similarity with the Quantal Response Equilibrium (QRE; McKelvey and Palfrey, 1995), in that both allow agents to believe that others make mistakes. In the QRE, however, there is the extra restriction that beliefs about the error rates are correct, a restriction not imposed in our analysis. As a matter of fact, the restriction is also rejected by the data. The cases in which subjects updated in the wrong direction (i.e., $a_t^2 > a_t^1$ after observing a bad signal or $a_t^2 > a_t^1$ after observing a good signal) amount to only 6% (a percentage approximately constant across periods). In this respect, our OC model is similar in spirit to the Subjective Quantal Response Equilibrium (SQRE; Goeree *et al.*, chapter 3), in which agents may have a misconceived (or subjective) view about the noise parameter defining the distribution of mistakes of the other agents. Our OC model is in line with such an extension of QRE. Yet, it is simpler while providing a good fit for the observed data.

Fourth, De Filippis *et al.* (2018) use some of the experimental data analysed in this paper and other experiments to show that at time 2 subjects update their private information in an asymmetric way, depending on whether it confirms or contradicts the belief formed on the observation of time 1's action only. De Filippis *et al.* (2018) study this issue at a considerable level of detail in that paper, since it is an important aspect of the updating used by subjects. In the present analysis, in which we study decisions at any time, we have abstracted from this issue. Our focus here is on social learning, that is, on how subjects learn from others (and form their "first belief," a_t^1) rather than on how they update on their private information (and form their "posterior belief," a_t^2). Moreover, while at time 2 the meaning of contradicting and confirming signal is well defined, (since there is just one predecessor) at later periods it becomes less clear. In an attempt to fit the data better, one could, perhaps, incorporate asymmetric updating in our framework, but our results seem already to be clearly supporting one model and rejecting others.

Fifth, while we have formally tested BRTNI, our results are clearly at odds with any model of information redundancy neglect. Our analysis shows that early actions do not have a disproportionate effect on later decisions (early signals have the same weight as later signals). Therefore, our results should not be considered as a rejection of the specific way redundancy neglect is modelled in BRTNI, but rather as an illustration that at least in the context studied in our experiment subjects do not seem to show redundancy neglect.

Finally, for the ABEE, it is perhaps not so surprising that it does not offer good predictions in this type of experiment. The assumption that agents only consider the aggregate frequencies of actions seems plausible in real world contexts, in which access to other statistics may even be difficult, but is less plausible in a laboratory experiment in which a subject stares at the sequence of actions other participants have chosen before him. It could be interesting to study whether presenting subjects with aggregate statistics changed their behavior and made it more in line with the ABEE. This is left for future research.

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Appendix (for online publication)

A Proofs

Proof of Proposition 4

The proposition can be proven in a recursive way. Agent 1 only observes his signal and chooses

$$\frac{a_1^{OC}}{100-a_1^{OC}} = \frac{a_1^{****}(s_1)}{100-a_1^{****}(s_1)} = \left(\frac{q_1}{1-q_1}\right)^{2s_t-1}.$$

Agent 2 observes a_1^{OC} and infers the signal realization, since an action greater (lower) than 50 can only be taken after observing a good (bad) signal. By the assumption of "k-overconfidence," he has subjective expectations on the predecessor's signal precision, and the likelihood ratio after observing the action is $\left(\frac{q_1}{1-q_1}\right)^{(2s_1-1)k}$ rather than $\left(\frac{q_1}{1-q_1}\right)^{(2s_1-1)}$. Hence,

$$\frac{a_2^{OC}}{100-a_2^{OC}} = \frac{a_2^{****}(s_1,s_2)}{100-a_2^{****}(s_1,s_2)} = \left(\frac{q_1}{1-q_1}\right)^{(2s_1-1)k}\left(\frac{q_2}{1-q_2}\right)^{2s_2-1}.$$

Note that this is equivalent to attributing precision $\frac{\left(\frac{q_1}{1-q_1}\right)^k}{1+\left(\frac{q_1}{1-q_1}\right)^k}$ to the predecessor's signals. Since k-overconfidence is common knowledge, agent 3 infers the signal realizations from the observation of a_1^{OC} and a_2^{OC} (since $a_2^{OC} > a_1^{OC}$ is only possible after observing a signal $s_2 = 1$, and $a_2^{OC} < a_1^{OC}$ after observing a signal $s_2 = 0$) and again uses subjective expectations for the precision of both, thus choosing a_3^{OC} such that

$$\frac{a_3^{OC}}{100-a_3^{OC}} = \frac{a_3^{****}(s_1,s_2,s_3)}{100-a_3^{****}(s_1,s_2,s_3)} = \Pi_{i=1}^2\left(\frac{q_i}{1-q_i}\right)^{(2s_i-1)k}\left(\frac{q_3}{1-q_3}\right)^{2s_3-1}.$$

The same steps apply to any further agent $t = 4,5,...,T$.

Proof of Proposition 5

Let us define $l(x) := \log\frac{x}{1-x}$. First, observe that, for each $t \geq 2$, the β coefficients are determined by the following equations:

$$\begin{aligned}
l(a_1^2) &= (2s_1-1)\,l(q_1),\\
l(a_2^2) &= \beta_{2,1}\,(2s_1-1)\,l(q_1)+(2s_2-1)\,l(q_2)\\
&\vdots\\
l(a_t^2) &= \beta_{t,1}\,(2s_1-1)\,l(q_1)+\cdots+\beta_{t,t-1}(2s_t-1)l(q_{t-1})+(2s_t-1)\,l(q_t).
\end{aligned}$$

In matrix notation,

$$\begin{pmatrix} l(a_1^2) \\ l(a_2^2) \\ \vdots \\ l(a_t^2) \end{pmatrix} = B \cdot \begin{pmatrix} (2s_1-1)l(q_1) \\ (2s_2-1)l(q_2) \\ \vdots \\ (2s_t-1)l(q_2) \end{pmatrix}, \tag{A.1}$$

where B is the $t \times t$ lower triangular matrix

$$B = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & \cdots & \cdots & 0 \\ \beta_{2,1} & 1 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ \beta_{3,1} & \beta_{3,2} & 1 & & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & & \ddots & \vdots \\ \beta_{t,1} & \beta_{t,2} & \cdots & \beta_{t,t-1} & 1 \end{pmatrix}.$$

Similarly, the γ coefficients are defined by the following equations:

$$\begin{aligned} l(a_1^2) &= (2s_1-1)\,l(q_1), \\ l(a_2^2) &= \gamma_{2,1} l(a_1^2) + (2s_2-1)\,l(q_2), \\ &\vdots \\ l(a_t^2) &= \gamma_{t,1} l(a_1^2) + \cdots + \gamma_{t,t-1}(2s_t-1)l(a_{t-1}^2) + (2s_t-1)\,l(q_t). \end{aligned}$$

In matrix notation,

$$\Gamma \begin{pmatrix} l(a_1^2) \\ l(a_2^2) \\ \vdots \\ l(a_t^2) \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} (2s_1-1)l(q_1) \\ (2s_2-1)l(q_2) \\ \vdots \\ (2s_t-1)l(q_2) \end{pmatrix},$$

where Γ is the $t \times t$ lower triangular matrix containing γ coefficients,

$$\Gamma = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & \cdots & \cdots & 0 \\ -\gamma_{2,1} & 1 & 0 & \cdots & 0 \\ -\gamma_{3,1} & -\gamma_{3,2} & 1 & & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & & \ddots & \vdots \\ -\gamma_{t,1} & -\gamma_{t,2} & \cdots & -\gamma_{t,t-1} & 1 \end{pmatrix}. \tag{A.2}$$

By comparing (A.1) with (A.2), one can see that, since B is nonsingular, $\Gamma = B^{-1}$ must hold. Hence, for $l < t$, $-\gamma_{t,l}$ is given by the $[t,l]$-element of B^{-1}.

The closed form solutions for $\gamma_{y,i}$ for each theory can also be obtained in a recursive way.

For the PBE, note that agent t chooses action a_t^{PBE} such that

$$\frac{a_t^*(s_1,s_2,..,s_t)}{100-a_t^*(s_1,s_2,..,s_t)} = \Pi_{i=1}^t \left(\frac{q_i}{1-q_i}\right)^{2s_i-1} =$$

$$\Pi_{i=1}^{t-1} \left(\frac{q_i}{1-q_i}\right)^{2s_i-1} \left(\frac{q_t}{1-q_t}\right)^{2s_t-1} =$$

$$\frac{a_{t-1}^*(s_1,s_2,..,s_{t-1})}{100-a_{t-1}^*(s_1,s_2,..,s_{t-1})} \left(\frac{q_t}{1-q_t}\right)^{2s_t-1}.$$

1. For BRTNI, observe that, by assumption, agent t chooses action a_t^{BRTNI} such that

$$\frac{a_t^{BRTNI}}{100-a_t^{BRTNI}} = \prod_{i=1}^{t-1} \frac{a_{t-i}^{BRTNI}}{100-a_{t-i}^{BRTNI}} \left(\frac{q_t}{1-q_t}\right)^{2s_t-1}.$$

(Indeed, Eyster and Rabin (2009) derive the β coefficients from this formula).

In the OC model, agent 2 chooses action a_2^{OC} such that

$$\frac{a_2^{OC}}{100-a_2^{OC}} = \left(\frac{q_1}{1-q_1}\right)^{(2s_1-1)k} \left(\frac{q_2}{1-q_2}\right)^{2s_2-1} =$$

$$\left(\frac{a_1^{OC}}{100-a_1^{OC}}\right)^k \left(\frac{q_2}{1-q_2}\right)^{2s_2-1}.$$

Agent 3 chooses action a_3^{OC} such that

$$\frac{a_3^{OC}}{100-a_3^{OC}} = \Pi_{i=1}^2 \left(\frac{q_i}{1-q_i}\right)^{(2s_i-1)k} \left(\frac{q_3}{1-q_3}\right)^{2s_3-1} =$$

$$\left(\frac{a_1^{OC}}{100-a_1^{OC}}\right)^k \left(\frac{q_2}{1-q_2}\right)^{(2s_2-1)k} \left(\frac{q_3}{1-q_3}\right)^{2s_3-1} =$$

$$\left(\frac{a_1^{OC}}{100-a_1^{OC}}\right)^k \left(\frac{a_2^{OC}}{100-a_2^{OC}}\right)^k \left(\frac{a_1^{OC}}{100-a_1^{OC}}\right)^{-k^2} \left(\frac{q_3}{1-q_3}\right)^{2s_3-1} =$$

$$\left(\frac{a_1^{OC}}{100-a_1^{OC}}\right)^{k(1-k)} \left(\frac{a_2^{OC}}{100-a_2^{OC}}\right)^k \left(\frac{q_3}{1-q_3}\right)^{2s_3-1}.$$

The same steps apply to any further agent $t = 4, 5, ..., T$.

Finally, let us consider the ABEE. First of all, recall that in the ABEE $\beta_{t,i} = t - i$, that is, $\beta_{t,t-k} = k$ for all $t = 2, 3, \ldots,$ and $k = 1, 2, \ldots, (t-1)$.

Consider now the system of equations $\Gamma B = I$. For $t = 2, 3, 4 \ldots,$ the product of the t-th row vector of Γ and the $(t-1)$-th column vector of B gives

$$-\gamma_{t,t-1} + \beta_{t,t-1} = 0,$$

from which we obtain that $\gamma_{t,t-1} = 1$. For $t = 3, 4, 5, \ldots$, the product of the t-th row vector of Γ and the $(t-2)$-th column vector of B gives

$$-\gamma_{t,t-2} - \gamma_{t,t-1}\beta_{t-1,t-2} + \beta_{t,t-2} = 0,$$

from which we obtain that $\gamma_{t,t-2} = 1$. For $t = 4, 5, 6, \ldots$, the product of the t-th row vector of Γ and the $(t-3)$-th column vector of B gives

$$-\gamma_{t,t-3} - \gamma_{t,t-2}\beta_{t-2,t-3} - \gamma_{t,t-1}\beta_{t-1,t-3} + \beta_{t,t-3} = 0,$$

from which we obtain that $\gamma_{t,t-3} = 0$.

Now, let us consider all $t = 5, 6, 7, \ldots$, and $k = 4, 5, 6, \ldots, (t-1)$. The product of the t-th row vector of Γ and the $(t-k)$-th column vector of B gives

$$\begin{aligned}
\gamma_{t,t-k} &= -\sum_{j=1}^{k-1} \gamma_{t,t-k+j}\beta_{t,t-j} + \beta_{t,t-k} \\
&= -\sum_{j=1}^{k-1} \gamma_{t,t-k+j}j + k.
\end{aligned}$$

On the basis of this equation, observe that the difference of $\gamma_{t,t-k-1}$ and $\gamma_{t,t-k}$ gives

$$\gamma_{t,t-k-1} - \gamma_{t,t-k} = -\gamma_{t,t-k} - \gamma_{t,t-k+1} - \gamma_{t,t-k+2} - \cdots - \gamma_{t,t-1} + 1.$$

Similarly, the difference between $(\gamma_{t,t-k-2} - \gamma_{t,t-k-1})$ and $(\gamma_{t,t-k-1} - \gamma_{t,t-k})$ gives

$$\gamma_{t,t-k-2} = \gamma_{t,t-k-1} - \gamma_{t,t-k}.$$

Moreover, the sum of $\gamma_{t,t-k-2}$ and $\gamma_{t,t-k-3}$ gives

$$\gamma_{t,t-k-3} = -\gamma_{t,t-k}.$$

Hence, starting from the three initial values, $\gamma_{t,t-1} = \gamma_{t,t-2} = 1$ and $\gamma_{t,t-3} = 0$, this equation iteratively pins down the whole sequence of $(\gamma_{t,t-1}, \gamma_{t,t-2}, \ldots, \gamma_{t,1})$. Specifically, $(\gamma_{t,t-4}, \gamma_{t,t-5}, \gamma_{t,t-6}) = (-1, -1, 0)$, $(\gamma_{t,t-7}, \gamma_{t,t-8}, \gamma_{t,t-9}) = (1, 1, 0)$, $(\gamma_{t,t-10}, \gamma_{t,t-11}, \gamma_{t,t-12}) = (-1, -1, 0)$, and so on. For instance, for subject 10, the weights are $(\gamma_{10,1}, \gamma_{10,2}, \gamma_{10,3}, \ldots, \gamma_{10,9}) = (0, 1, 1, 0, -1, -1, 0, 1, 1)$.

Finally note that, given its cyclical feature, the sequence of weights can be expressed as $\gamma_{t,t-k} = sign(\sin(\frac{k}{3}\pi)$, or $\gamma_{t,i} = sign(\sin(\frac{t-i}{3}\pi)$.

B Testing Differences across Treatments

Table B.1: Differences across Treatments:
Median Rank-sum Test for Action 1 (p-value)

	SL1 vs. SL2	SL1 vs. SL3	SL2 vs. SL3
Period 1	0.999	0.999	0.999
Period 2	0.136	0.520	0.738
Period 3	0.317	0.881	0.317
Period 4	0.738	0.597	0.829
Period 5	0.881		
Period 6	0.911		
Period 7	0.316		
Period 8	0.289		
Period 9	0.435		
Period 10	0.420		

For each period, the test is performed using session-specific medians.

Table B.2: Differences across Treatments:
Median Rank-sum Test for Action 2 (p-value)

	SL1 vs. SL2	SL1 vs. SL3	SL2 vs. SL3
Period 1	0.459	0.834	0.751
Period 2	0.220	0.999	0.243
Period 3	0.218	0.345	0.914
Period 4	0.281	0.244	0.117
Period 5	0.911		
Period 6	0.599		
Period 7	0.023		
Period 8	0.590		
Period 9	0.529		
Period 10	0.805		

For each period, the test is performed using session-specific medians.

C Factoring Out Uninformative Actions

In this section we offer a robustness check, by factoring out actions that are, presumably, uninformative. In particular, as a first step, we define an action at time i as uninformative according to the criterion:

$$(a^2_{i=1} = 50) \text{ or } (a^2_i = a^2_{i-1}) \text{ for } i = 2, \cdots, t-1.$$

To factor out these actions, we eliminate them and renumber the entire sequence (e.g., if action 3 is uninformative, then action 3 is eliminated, period 4 becomes period 3, period 5 becomes period 4 and so on).

It is worth noting that this procedure implies a loss of observations for later periods. In particular, the available observations for $t = 10$ are 47. Coefficients for this period are not reliably estimated. We report them without confidence intervals and only for the sake of completeness. For the same reason, we do not report hypothesis testing p-values and estimates of k for this period.

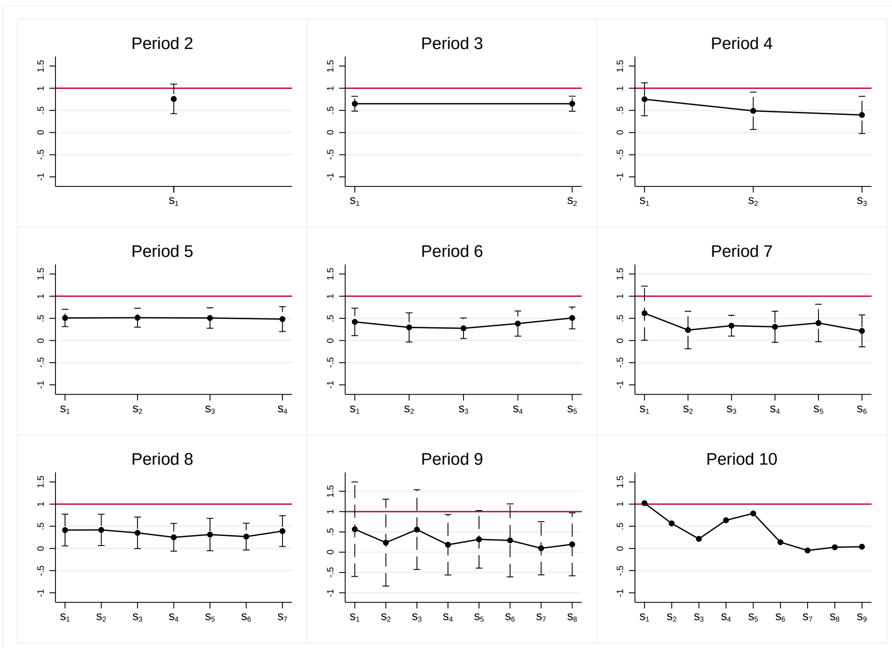
We have repeated the analysis using a more stringent criterion according to which an action i is classified as uninformative if and only if

$$(a^2_{i=1} = 50) \text{ or } (a^2_i = a^2_{i-1}) \text{ or } (a^2_{i-1} = 0 \text{ or } a^2_{i-1} = 100) \text{ for } i = 2, \cdots, t-1.$$

The results are similar to those presented here and available upon request.

We have also used a different methodology, by attributing the value $s_i = 0.5$ (uninformative signal) to any uninformative action. The results are again broadly similar to those presented here and available upon request.

Figure C.1: Quantile Regressions of Action 1 on Predecessors' Signals Eliminating Uninformative Periods (Estimated Weights)



The figure shows the estimated coefficients from a median regression of first action loglikelihood ratios on predecessors' signal loglikelihood ratios after eliminating uninformative periods. For each period $t = 1, \ldots, 10$, predecessors' signals, $s_i, i = 1, \ldots, t-1$, are on the x-axis; corresponding point estimates and 95% confidence intervals are on the y-axis, represented by black dots and dashed capped lines, respectively. Confidence intervals are computed by bootstrap (500 replications), clustering at the session level.

Table C.1: Hypothesis Testing: Weights on Predecessors' Signals (p-values)
Dependent Variable: Action 1 (loglikelihood ratio)
Eliminating Uninformative Periods

	H_0^{PBE}: $\beta_{t,1} = \cdots = \beta_{t,t-1} = 1$	H_0^{BRTNI}: $\beta_{t,i} = 2^{t-i-1}\ \forall i = 1, \ldots, t-1$
Period 2	0.155	0.155
Period 3	0.000	0.000
Period 4	0.004	0.000
Period 5	0.000	0.000
Period 6	0.000	0.000
Period 7	0.000	0.000
Period 8	0.000	0.000
Period 9	0.000	0.000
	H_0^{ABEE}: $\beta_{t,i} = t - i\ \forall i = 1, \ldots, t-1$	H_0^{OC}: $\beta_{t,1} = \cdots = \beta_{t,t-1}$
Period 2	0.155	.
Period 3	0.000	0.999
Period 4	0.000	0.094
Period 5	0.000	0.993
Period 6	0.000	0.583
Period 7	0.000	0.620
Period 8	0.000	0.995
Period 9	0.000	0.995

The table reports tests based on bootstrap standard errors (500 replications), clustering at the session level.

Table C.2: Quantile Regressions of Action 1 on Predecessors' Signals:
Estimation of k under $H_0^{OC} : \beta_{t,1} = \cdots = \beta_{t,t-1}$
Eliminating Uninformative Periods

	$\hat{k}$	95% Confidence Interval lower limit	upper limit
Period 2	0.752	0.460	0.996
Period 3	0.650	0.518	0.821
Period 4	0.559	0.438	0.997
Period 5	0.508	0.332	0.648
Period 6	0.422	0.250	0.547
Period 7	0.332	0.200	0.511
Period 8	0.272	0.097	0.436
Period 9	0.351	0.001	0.997
All	0.463	0.327	0.622

The table reports 95% confidence intervals obtained with bootstrap (500 replications), clustering at the session level.

D Instructions

Welcome to our experiment! We hope you will enjoy it.

You are about to take part in a study on decision making with 9 other participants. Everyone in the experiment has the same instructions. If something in the instructions is not clear and you have questions, please, do not hesitate to ask for clarification. We will be happy to answer your questions privately.

Depending on your choices, the other participants' choices and some luck you will earn some money. You will receive the money immediately after the experiment.

D.1 The Experiment

The experiment consists of 15 rounds of decision making. In each round you will make two consecutive decisions. All of you will participate in each round.

What you have to do

In each round, you have simply to choose a number between 0 and 100. You will make this choice twice, before and after receiving some information. The reason for these choices is the following. There is a good whose value can be either 0 or 100 units of a fictitious currency called "lira." You will not be told whether the good is worth 0 or 100 liras, but will receive some information about which value is more likely to have been chosen by a computer. We will ask you to predict the value of the good, that is, to indicate the chance that the value is 100 liras.

The value of the good

Whether the good will be worth 0 or 100 liras will be determined randomly at the beginning of each round: there will be a probability of 50% that the value is 0 and a probability of 50% that it is 100 liras, like in the toss of a coin. The computer chooses the value of the good in each round afresh. The value of the good in one round never depends on the value of the good in one of the previous rounds.

What you will know about the value

Although you will not be told the value of the good, you will, however, receive some information about which value is more likely to have been chosen. For each of you, the computer will use two "virtual urns" both containing green and red balls. The proportion of the two types of balls in each urn, however, is different. One urn contains more red than green balls, whereas the other urn contains more green than red balls. If the value of the good is 0, you will observe a ball drawn from an urn containing more red balls. If the value is 100, instead, you will observe a ball drawn from an urn containing more green balls. To recap:

- If the value is 100, then there are more GREEN balls in the urn.
- If the value is 0, then there are more RED balls in the urn.

Therefore, the ball color will give you some information about the value of the good. Below we will tell you more about how many balls there are in the urns. First, though, let us see more precisely what will happen in each round.

D.2 Procedures for each round

In each of the 15 rounds you will make decisions in sequence, one after the other. There will be 10 periods. Each of you will make her/his two choices only in one period, randomly chosen. Since there are 10 participants, this means that all of you will participate in each round.

The precise sequence of events is the following:

First: the computer program will decide randomly if the good for that round is worth 0 or 100 liras. You will not be told this value. On your screen you will read "Round 1 of 15. The computer is deciding the value of the good by flipping a coin."

Second: the computer program will randomly select who is the first person who has to make a choice. Each of you has the same ($1/10th$) chance of being selected.

Third: the computer will draw a ball from the "virtual urn" and inform the first person (only the first person) of the drawn ball color. The first person will see this information on the screen. No one else will see it. The other participants will be waiting.

Fourth: after the person sees this information, (s)he has to choose a number between 0 and 100. This can be done by moving a slider on the screen (to select a precise number, please, use the arrows on your keyboard). The decision made will be visible to all participants.

Fifth: the computer will now randomly choose another person. Again, all the remaining 9 people have the same ($1/9th$) chance of being chosen.

Sixth: this second person, having observed the first person's prediction, will be asked to make her/his prediction, choosing a number between 0 and 100. This decision will not be visible to other participants.

Seventh: after the decision, the computer will draw a ball from the "virtual urn" and inform (only) the second person of its color.

Eighth: the second person, after observing the ball color, will now make a new prediction, choosing again a number between 0 and 100. This choice is visible to all participants.

Ninth: the computer will choose a third person. This person will have to make two predictions, before and after receiving information, exactly as the second person. The first decision is after having observed the first two persons' predictions. The second prediction is after having observed the ball color too. The decision made after seeing the ball color will be visible to everyone. Then the computer will choose the fourth person and so on, until all ten people have had the opportunity to participate.

Tenth: the computer will reveal the value of the good for the round and the payoff you earned in the round.

Observation 1: All 10 participants have to make the same type of decision, predicting the value of the good. However, the first person in the sequence is asked to make only one prediction, while the others will make two. The reason is simple. Since the first person knows nothing, the only sensible prediction is 50, given that there is a $50-50$ chance that the value is 0 or 100 liras. Therefore, if you are the first, we do not ask you to make the prediction before seeing the ball color. Instead, if you are a subsequent person, we will ask you to make a prediction even before seeing the ball color, just after observing the predecessors' predictions. **Always recall that the predecessors' predictions that you will observe are the second predictions that they made, that is, the predictions they made after receiving information about the ball color.**

Observation 2: As we said, when it is your turn, the computer will draw a ball from one of two virtual urns: the urn containing more red than green balls if the value is zero; and the urn containing more green than red balls if the value is 100. But, exactly how many red and green balls are there in the urns? If the value is 0, then there are 70 red balls and 30 green balls. If the value is 100, then there are 70 green balls and 30 red balls.

D.3 Your per-round payoff

Your earnings depend on how well you predict the value of the good. If you are the first person in the sequence, your payoff will depend on the only prediction that you are asked to make. If you are a subsequent decision maker, your payoff will depend on the first or the second prediction you make, with the same chance (like in the toss of a coin).

If you predict the value exactly, you will earn 100 liras. If your prediction differs from the true value by an amount x, you will earn $100 - 0.01x^2$. This means that the further your prediction is from the true value, the less you will earn. Moreover, if your mistake is small, you will be penalized only a small amount; if your mistake is big, you will be penalized more than proportionally.

To make this rule clear, let us see some examples.

Example 1: Suppose the true value is 100. Suppose you predict 80. In this case you made a mistake of 20. We will give you $100 - 0.01 * 20^2 = 96.0$ liras.

Example 2: Suppose the true value is 0. Suppose you predict 10. In this case you made a mistake of 10. We will give you $100 - 0.01 * 10^2 = 99$ liras.

Example 3: Suppose the true value is 100. Suppose you predict 25. In this case you made a mistake of 75. We will give you $100 - 0.01 * 75^2 = 43.75$ liras.

Example 4: Suppose the true value is 0. Suppose you predict 50. In this case you made a mistake of 50. We will give you $100 - 0.01 * 50^2 = 75$ liras.

Note that the worst you can do under this payoff scheme is to state that you believe that there is a 100% chance that the value is 100 when in fact it is 0, or you believe that there is a 100% chance that the value is 0 when in fact it is 100. Here your payoff from prediction would be 0. Similarly, the best you can do is to guess correctly and assign 100% to the value which turns out to be the actual value of the good. Here your payoff will be 100 liras.

Note that with this payoff scheme, the best thing you can do to maximize the expected size of your payoff is simply to state your true belief about what you think the true value of the good is. Any other prediction will decrease the amount you can expect to earn. For instance, suppose you think there is a 90% chance that the value of the good is 100 and, hence, a 10% chance that value is 0. If this is your belief about the likely value of the good, to maximize your expected payoff, choose 90 as your prediction. Similarly, if you think the value is 100 with chance 33% and 0 with chance 67%, then select 33.

D.4 The other rounds

We will repeat the procedures described in the first round for 14 more rounds. As we said, at the beginning of each new round, the value of the good is again randomly chosen by the computer. Therefore, the value of the good in round 2 is independent of the value in round 1 and so on.

D.5 The final payment

To compute your payment, we will randomly choose (with equal chance) one round among the first five, one among the rounds $6 - 10$ and one among the last five rounds. For each of these round we will then choose either prediction 1 or prediction 2 (with equal chance), unless you turn was 1, in which case there is nothing to choose since you only made one prediction. We will sum the payoffs that you have obtained for those predictions and rounds. We will then convert your payoff into pounds at the exchange rate of 100 liras $= \pounds 7$. That is, for every 100 liras you earn, you will get 7 pounds. Moreover, you will receive a participation fee of $\pounds 5$ just for showing up on time. You will be paid in cash, in private, at the end of the experiment.