

## **Determinants of partner choice and ostracism: an experimental analysis**

Why are some individuals' chosen as cooperative partners and others ostracised? This laboratory experiment will examine how asymmetry in wealth and environmental instability determine partner choice and ostracism. We will use an iterated Prisoner's Dilemma format, where individuals can cooperate (share resources with a partner) or defect (withhold resources from a partner). In some conditions there will be an asymmetric payoff structure: one 'rich' player receives higher payoffs, and their 'poor' opponent receives lower payoffs. Payoff asymmetry is stable in some conditions, and has a 0.5 probability of reversing between rounds in others. Participants choose partners based on behaviour in previous rounds, and in some conditions there is the option of voting to ostracise others permanently from the game. We hypothesise subjects are more likely to ostracise others in the condition where 'rich' and 'poor' players' ability to help remains stable than when it fluctuates. This is intended as an experimental investigation of how accusations of witchcraft (causing harm to others through supernatural means) occur in the context of 1) differential levels of wealth and also 2) stable wealth levels versus environments where individuals experience short-term fluctuations in resources. Participants will be students from Lanzhou University, China, and UCL.