



FROM SOCIAL MEDIA TO THE  
RATIONALITY OF ART  
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During my stay at Wiko I made significant progress on my research project on social media interactions. A central issue on which I advanced concerns the *spillover effect* from the

social media sphere into real-life interactions. To address this question, we began from a broader perspective: *to what extent do spillover effects exist across different interactive environments?* For example, do toxic workplaces generate negative externalities that carry over into other domains, such as interactions within families, between service providers and their customers, or among neighbors?

While in Berlin I worked on the *design of a laboratory experiment* to test these spillover effects and coordinated with my co-authors at Lancaster University on running the experiment. The design consists of two stages. In the first stage, participants face the possibility of exploitation. In the second, they engage in a battery of three games—the trust game, the public goods game, and the prisoner’s dilemma. Although participants in stage two interact with entirely new partners, experiences in stage one influence their pro-social behavior in stage two, for both those who were exploited and those who exploited others.

Our findings suggest that among the exploited, experiences of unfairness reduce the propensity to cooperate and to trust. Moreover, exploiters whose exploitation was unintentional also exhibit a decline in pro-social behavior. We interpret these results in the context of toxic workplaces: workers’ experiences in such environments generate negative externalities that extend beyond the workplace, affecting interactions in other domains. These externalities can be seen as a form of *social pollution* which—like environmental pollution—should entail responsibility beyond the direct consequences for a firm’s own employees. The same concerns apply to social media as well. Irresponsible platforms that foster toxic interactions can generate social pollution with effects that extend beyond the online sphere.

Alongside this project, I also pursued my interest in the *rationality of art*. I organized a workshop at the Institute with the artists Amnon Ar (Berlin), Elie Shamir (Israel), and David William Hughes (Freiburg), as well as Professor Henrik Walter (Charité—Universitätsmedizin Berlin), among others. Together, we discussed the rationality of art from evolutionary, psychological, and social perspectives. I also explored these issues in depth with the History group among the Institute’s Fellows and their partners, especially in conversations with Dror Wahrman and Abraham Winitzer.

I benefited substantially from the weekly Colloquia and workshops at the Institute. I gained more from those that address pure and general research questions, and less from those that center on political debates, where researchers are often predisposed to a certain position because of their background. *I would strongly recommend that the Institute keep*

*Colloquia, workshops, and other activities on political issues in both science and art to a minimum.* They rarely lead to genuine scientific or artistic breakthroughs and can too easily create friction among Fellows from different backgrounds.

My relatively short stay at the Institute was enormously productive, engaging, and enjoyable, and I look forward to returning for shorter periods in the future.