Self-Introduction

- **Briefly introduce yourself, the department and school that you are in.**

*I am **Assoc Prof Yohanes Eko Riyanto** from the Economics Program at the **School of Social Sciences** (SSS).*

Elaboration

- **Share with us what is your research project.**

My research focuses on Experimental and Behavioral Economics topics. I utilize controlled laboratory experiments to study how people make a host of individual and collective economic decisions, and how these decisions are influenced by their preferences, beliefs, financial and non-financial constraints, environment (i.e. market and non-market institutions surrounding them), and strategic interactions with other individuals. I incorporate insights from Microeconomics, Game Theory, Decision Sciences, Behavioral Economics, and Psychology in my analysis.

Currently, I am working on several research thrusts. The first one is the experimental asset markets and behavioral finance. Within this research thrust, I study market efficiency, asset price dynamics, risk sharing, and investors' trading behaviors in simulated financial markets in the laboratory.

The second one is the application of market design on the allocation of organ for transplants from donors to recipients. Specifically, my research focuses on how to incentivize people to register as organ donors using different allocation priority rules, incentive mechanisms, salient information, and behavioral nudges. A well-designed priority rule for organ allocation helps to moderate organ scarcity by improving allocative efficiency and providing stronger donation incentives.

The third one is the role of social preferences in motivating people's desire to build a social-bond that would enhance cooperation and coordination in the society where the individual and collective interests are not necessarily aligned. Within this thrust, I also study the dynamics of trust and trustworthiness and how they evolve in social networks, honest and dishonest behaviors, altruistic behaviors in market and non-market settings, the role of culture, identity, and language in shaping people's pro-social behaviors.

- **What inspired you to embark on this research project?**

I get research inspiration from real-world observations I encounter every day through various sources like current news, science news, business and economics news, and online resources. In addition to that, I also get research inspiration from recently published papers in scientific journals. I subscribe to the online notification of new articles from these journals and regularly browse these forthcoming articles to get some rough ideas of what these papers are focusing on. For the topics I am interested in investigating, I envisage how they would pan out in social experiments constructed in the lab. I would then start working on the experiment design, and construct experimental predictions based on the existing economic and social theories or build tractable and straightforward economic models often with the help of economic theorists as collaborators. I use the experimental results obtained to inform further development of the theories.

One example of these real-world observations is the observation from the opt-out organ donation scheme implemented in many countries. On paper, this scheme should yield a higher donation rate, but in reality, it often does not translate to a higher rate of transplantation. This raises a question on what can be done to boost the donation rate further. This got me thinking of research aimed at addressing the issue. Together with a co-author who is an expert in market design, we study the role of priority allocation rule giving a donor a priority ahead of non-donors when the donor would require a transplant him (her) self.

- **What is/are the most interesting finding(s) of this project?**

Given the wide range of topics I am working on, it is difficult to single out one interesting finding. So let me just give an example of my recently published paper on how social networks influence trust and trustworthiness. This paper shows that trust and trustworthiness are higher for individuals who are more closely connected; in both cases, this relationship tapers off beyond second-degree friendships. This paper also shows that people tend to trust more central (popular) individuals. However, being more central (popular) has little influence on one's levels of trust and trustworthiness. We find that the expectation of trustworthiness partially drives these effects on trust. All in all, it implies that there is a bias toward more closely connected and more popular individuals. I find this result interesting as it relates to a highly relevant topic on how the pervasiveness of social media would influence trust and trustworthiness as the fabrics of social capital in society.

- **How do you think your research can impact society?**

I hope that my research which utilizes behavioral economics and laboratory experimental methodology can help decision-makers make informed decisions based on the evidence. By investigating how policies might or might not work within the confine of the lab, we can evaluate whether or not the proposed policies need to be modified to remove or lessen the negative impacts. This approach is better than directly implementing the policies. This is because when the policies do not really work, the negative impacts on people are irreversible. We should think of randomized controlled experiments as testbeds for policies.

Future Plans

- **Tell us about your future research plans and if you are looking for any research collaborators!**

I would love to be able to collaborate with scholars from other disciplines. Increasingly, real-world issues are complex and cannot be analyzed using one single lens; instead they are multi-dimensional and require insights from other disciplines. So I am always looking for research collaborators. What I can bring to the table in collaboration is insights from behavioral economics and economics in general, as well as the economic-experiment methodology that I know very well. I hope others may find them useful to provide complementary insights.