**Experimental Structure**

The experiment was conducted between March and July 2008. The experiment was fully computerized and had three experimental treatments. Treatment A was a standard laboratory experiment with university students. Subjects were randomly seated in the laboratory. Computer terminals were partitioned to avoid communication by facial or verbal means. Subjects read the experimental instructions and answered a preliminary questionnaire, to check understanding of the instructions, before proceeding with the tasks. If they got any answers incorrectly in the ‘understanding check’ questionnaire, they received feedback from the computer screen and could also ask for additional help from the experimental supervisors. We had 57 students participating to Treatment A.

Treatment B was a purely online version of the experiment, run again with university students (different from those who participated to Treatment A). Subjects could log in the experiment remotely from their own workstations and do the experiment in their own time. They did the same understanding check questionnaire as in Treatment A and could email the experimental supervisors if anything was unclear (very few did). We had 153 students completing Treatment B online.

Treatment C was run online with competition policy practitioners who we had approached through the heads of their agencies.[[1]](#footnote-1) Participating agencies came from Austria, Canada, Denmark, EU, France, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, and the UK (both the UK Competition and the Office of Fair Trading). The experimental protocol was exactly the same as in Treatment B. We had 67 practitioners completing Treatment C online.

In each of the treatments, each subjects made 24 choices in relation to each of 24 scenarios presented to them, where we consider the separate influences of different standards of proofs, volume of evidence and cost of error in the context of merger appraisal, and specifically on whether a merger should be referred for further investigation or blocked.

For more details, please see the published version of the paper (Lyons et al., 2012) or alternatively the open access working paper version of the paper (Lyons et al., 2010).

**REFERENCES**

Lyons, B., Menzies, G.D. and D.J. Zizzo (2012), "[Conflicting Evidence and Decisions by Agency Professionals: An Experimental Test in the Context of Merger Regulation](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11238-011-9258-3)", *Theory and Decision*, 73(3), September, 465-499.

Lyons, B., Menzies, G.D. and D.J. Zizzo (2010), "[Professional Interpretation of the Standard of Proof: An Experimental Test on Merger Regulation](http://competitionpolicy.ac.uk/documents/107435/107587/1.141874%21ccp10-2.pdf)", University of East Anglia CCP Working Paper 10-2.

1. 14 competition policy agencies heads agreed that at least some of their case staff could be approached to volunteer cooperation. Most expressed a concern that only a limited number of their staff should participate because of the opportunity cost of staff time. Most agency heads nominated a member of their staff to forward an e-mail approach from us so we could invite them to log on to a confidential secure website in order to participate in the experiment. We do not know how many staff were approached by each agency in this way and so we cannot calculate a meaningful response rate. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)