Panel: Behavioral Interventions in Public Sector

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Title  Nudging an Online Communication with City Office: Field Experiment from Prievidza, Slovakia

Abstract  Local markets are events with a long tradition in Slovakia. Several villages and cities were named after the days, during which markets took place hundreds of years ago. It is no surprise that current local public administration persistently continues in this tradition. Markets became tradition and a source of sentiment for many, organization of them became a typical agenda of local governments. Yet as with it is in most of the policies, the bureaucratic procedure that is repeatedly undertaken for the sake of the organization lags behind the possibilities of the current, technologically advanced era. Approximately 2 out of 10 potential marketeers still prefer offline (via post office or direct contact) communication with the city office. The administrative costs of managing offline applications are considerably higher than in the case of online applications (via e-mail or online forms). The paper presents insights gained from a field experiment conducted in partnership with local public administration of Prievidza (50-thousand inhabitants) in Slovakia. The field experiment aimed to help local clerks organize the local markets more efficiently by nudging applying marketeers towards the e-mail communication (instead of offline communication). In other words, the aim of the paper is to improve the efficiency – to decrease administrative cost (time which is spent by clerks in managing applications to run a market stall). The nudge has a form of a framed text that was implemented onto the subpage of city’s webpage, which contains all instructions and information necessary for the application process and where the applying marketeers commonly download the application. The paper brings the results of the nudge and outline areas for further research.