ALA AVOYAN

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Education

Ph.D. in Economics, New York University, 2012-2018 (expected)
M.A. in Economics (Summa Cum Laude), International School of Economics at TSU (ISET), 2010-2012
B.Sc. in Mathematic (Honors), Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU), 2006-2010

References

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Teaching and Research Fields

Microeconomic Theory, Experimental Economics and Behavioral Economics.

Teaching Experience

Summer 2016	Intermediate Microeconomics, NYU, Instructor.
Spring 2014–16	MA Microeconomics, NYU, teaching fellow for Anna Adachi and James Hodge.
Fall 2015	Undergraduate Statistics, NYU, teaching fellow for Xiaochen Fan.
Fall 2014	Undergraduate Statistics, NYU, teaching fellow for Unurjargal Nyambuu.
Spring 2012	MA Econometrics, ISET, teaching fellow for Karine Torosyan
Fall 2011	MA Macroeconomics, ISET, teaching fellow for Yaroslava Babych
Summer 2011–12	MA Mathematics, ISET, teaching fellow for Tornike Kadeishvili.

Research Experience

Summer 2014–16	Center for Experimental Social Science (CESS), Research Assistant
Summer 2011	National Bank of Georgia (NBG), Research Assistant

Professional Activities

Conferences and Seminar Presentations

2017	SITE Conference at Stanford University; Barcelona GSE Summer Forum; 28th International Conference on Game Theory at Stony Brook; ESA World Meeting, San Diego, CA; Columbia-NYU-Wharton Conference in Experimental Economics; North American ESA Meeting in Richmond, VA.
2016	SITE Conference at Stanford University; Barcelona GSE Summer Forum; Columbia-NYU-Wharton Conference in Experimental Economics; 27th International Conference on Game Theory at Stony Brook; North American ESA Meeting in Tucson, AZ.
2015	North American ESA Meeting in Dallas, Texas.

Summer School

2016	Russell Sage Foundation 12th Summer Institute in Behavioral Economics

Co-organizer

2015-2016	Microeconomics Student Lunch, NYU

Honors, Scholarships, and Fellowships

2017–2018	Dean's Dissertation Fellowship, NYU
2012–2017	Henry M. McCracken Fellowship, NYU
2012–2014	Dean's Supplementary Fellowship Grant, NYU
2010–2012	Future Leader Scholarship, ISET
2010–2012	Full scholarship for MA program, TSU
2007–2010	Presidential Scholarship, TSU
2006–2010	Full scholarship for BSc program, TSU

Publications outside of Economics

Avoyan, Ala (2013) "On the Galois Group of some Fuchsian systems," *Journal of Mathematical Sciences*, Vol. 193, Issue 3 , pp. 359-363.
Avoyan, Ala and David Tsirekidze (2013) "Decomposition of an integer as a sum of two cubes to a fixed modulus," *Matematički Vesnik*, Vol. 65, No. 3, pp. 383-386.

Research Papers

Communication in Global Games: Theory and Experiment (Job Market Paper)

This paper introduces communication as a strategic choice in global games. I characterize the resulting equilibria and test the theoretical predictions in a laboratory setting. Introducing simultaneous two-sided cheap-talk communication induces an informative equilibrium in which individuals share their intended actions. Cheap-talk communication studied in this paper improves welfare by reducing two types of inefficiencies present in global games: (i) the payoff-dominant equilibrium is selected instead of the risk-dominant one, yielding substantial gains in efficiency; and (ii) miscoordination is reduced because players' actions are more correlated. The experimental results provide support for qualitative features of the informative equilibrium. All communication protocols significantly reduce miscoordination. Despite the decrease in miscoordination, one-stage communication protocols have mixed effects on welfare, while multi-stage cheap-talk provides significantly higher welfare.

A Road to Efficiency Through Communication and Commitment (with João Ramos)

We examine the efficiency gains of introducing a pre-play phase—allowing agents to communicate their intentions and commit to them—in a game with Pareto ranked equilibria. We focus on a game in which a Pareto inferior equilibrium is usually chosen. We first derive the theoretical conditions under which the efficient equilibrium is unique in the extended game and then we test our theory in the lab. The introduction of the pre-play revision phase increases the coordination on the Pareto dominant equilibrium, restoring over 50% of the efficiency lost in the standard setting. The results shed new light on cheap talk and reveal that a combination of communication and commitment leads to significantly higher welfare.

Attention In Games: An Experimental Study (with Andrew Schotter)

A common assumption in game theory is that players concentrate on one game at a time. However, in everyday life, we play many games and make many decisions at the same time, and, thus, we have to decide how best to divide our limited attention across these settings. In this paper we ask how players solve this attention-allocation problem and how their decision affects the way players behave in any given game when that game is viewed in isolation. We find that the attention of players is attracted to particular features of the games they play: the maximum payoff in the game, the minimum payoff, the degree of inequality in the game's payoff, whether the game has zero payoffs, the complexity of the game, and the type of game being played. Moreover, how much attention a subject gives to a particular game depends on the other game that he or she is simultaneously attending to.

Research in Progress

Paying For Inattention (with Giorgia Romagnoli)

We extend the model of costly information acquisition to the case where a decision maker is able to affect his own incentives to pay attention via an ex-ante redistribution of payoffs across states. We use this framework to derive a novel method to elicit the level and the cost of attention solely from observing the choices of payoff redistribution. While existing work in this literature typically involves enriched datasets (e.g., mouse and eye tracking, response times, stochastic choice data etc.) our method requires only standard choice data. We conduct an experiment and estimate the level and the cost of attention using our elicitation technique.

The Cost and the Reward of Lying in Cheap-Talk Games (with Nikhil Vellodi)

Cheap talk games are well known to suffer from multiplicity of equilibria. A common approach in addressing this issue is to appeal to refinement concepts that discipline the equilibrium set. However, a potential issue with such an approach is the presence of intrinsic costs of lying that, if left unmodeled, might affect the predictive accuracy of such refinements. We study a game experimentally that allows us to explicitly control for intrinsic costs of lying, by punishing or rewarding lying. The game is simple to implement, and makes sharp and contrasting predictions in the presence/absence of lying costs. We are thus able to make unbiased predictions on the efficacy of the various refinement concepts in question.

Research in Progress under NSF Grant: "Attention in Games and Decisions"

On the Consistency of Attention and Response Times (with Andrew Schotter and Elizabeth Schotter)
Attention Allocation in One Person Decision Problems (with Andrew Schotter and Elizabeth Schotter)