

Billur Görgülü

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Research Interests: Behavioral Economics, Microeconomic Theory, Experimental Economics

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Economics, University of Toronto	2026 (Expected)
Committee: Yoram Halevy (co-supervisor), Marcin Pęski (co-supervisor), Colin Stewart, Anne-Katrin Roesler	
M.A. in Economics, University of Toronto	2019
B.S. in Mathematics, Bogazici University	2018
B.A. in Economics, Bogazici University	2018

RESEARCH PAPERS

Optimal Memory Retention with Learning from Forgetting (Job Market Paper)

Uncertain Present Bias with Johannes Hoelzemann and Yoram Halevy

Vulnerability as Strength: Trusting as a Credible Signal of Competence with Yuval Deutsch and Sabrina Salomon

WORK IN PROGRESS

Disentangling Pure Time Preferences with Yoram Halevy

Bounded Rationality in Decentralized Matching Markets with Sean M. T. Elliott

AWARDS AND GRANTS

University of Toronto Doctoral Fellowship	2019 - 2024
University of Toronto Master's Scholarship	2018 - 2019
Alper Orhon Econometrics Award	2018
Turkish Prime Minister's Scholarship for Top 100 Students	2013 - 2018
Bogazici University Dean's High Honor List	2013 - 2018
Bogazici University High Achievement Scholarship	2013 - 2018
Is Bank Golden Youth Award	2014
National University Entrance Exam - <i>Ranked 8th in 1.9 million students</i>	2013

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Laboratory Manager, Toronto Experimental Economics Laboratory 2024 - present

Teaching Assistant

Department of Economics, University of Toronto

- ECO2200: Microeconomic Theory I (PhD) 2021
- ECO2201: Microeconomic Theory II (PhD) 2021 - 2024
- ECO101: Principles of Microeconomics 2021 - 2022
- ECO200: Intermediate Microeconomic Theory 2023
- ECO220: Introduction to Data Analysis and Applied Econometrics 2018 - 2022
- ECO316: Applied Game Theory 2022
- ECO364: International Trade Theory 2018 - 2019

Department of Economics, Bogazici University

- EC203: Intermediate Microeconomics 2015
- EC361: International Economics 2016 - 2017
- EC308: Advanced Macroeconomics 2018

Research Assistant

- Yoram Halevy: proofreading theoretical results 2023 - 2024
- Anne-Katrin Roesler: proofreading theoretical results 2022 - 2023
- Mitchell Hoffman: coding, proofreading 2018 - 2019
- Begum Ozkaynak: literature review 2017 - 2018

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

CEA Annual Meeting, CEBERG 2025

REFEREEING EXPERIENCE

Academy of Management Review

OTHER INFORMATION

Citizenship: Turkish

Languages: Turkish (native), English (fluent), French (upper intermediate)

Programming: Python, Stata, MATLAB, Mathematica, R, oTree, L^AT_EX

REFERENCES

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Abstracts

Optimal Memory Retention with Learning from Forgetting (Job Market Paper)

If people know that they may forget information over time, do they strategically respond to their memory decay? I develop a theoretical model of imperfect recall in which a decision-maker optimally shapes memory retention through effort choice. When the decision-maker attempts to recall previously encoded data, the success or failure of recall provides a signal about their own forgetting rate, leading to updated beliefs about memory strength and effort adjustment. This mechanism endogenously generates the spacing effect, a key property of human memory. I test the model's behavioral predictions with a novel laboratory experiment. The results show that participants are aware of their forgetting and choose their costly effort for memorization accordingly. Moreover, after observing negative feedback about their actual memory strength, participants adjust their behavior by choosing a higher effort. These findings suggest that individuals can deliberately manage their memory retention through effort, making imperfect recall an endogenous component of decision-making.

Uncertain Present Bias with Johannes Hoelzemann and Yoram Halevy

Understanding if and how uncertainty shapes diminishing impatience is central to theories of intertemporal choice. We report the first incentivized experiment that directly compares present bias across certain, risky, and ambiguous monetary outcomes. Relative to certainty, uncertainty attenuates present bias, yielding more stationary choices. Moreover, present bias for certain payments is positively associated with ambiguity aversion. Together, these results suggest that uncertainty systematically interacts with time preferences and caution against models that treat intertemporal choice separable from attitude towards uncertainty.

Vulnerability as Strength: Trusting as a Credible Signal of Competence

with Yuval Deutsch and Sabrina Deutsch Salamon

Why people trust without sufficient information about the trustworthiness of the other is a major puzzle in trust research. Drawing on evolutionary psychology signaling logic, we develop a formal model that offers a novel explanation as to why leaders make this seemingly irrational decision. We demonstrate that leaders can signal superior competence by assuming the risk inherent to trusting. Credibly communicating competence, in turn, leads to improved outcomes for these leaders and their followers alike. We show that signaling is a viable strategy only for leaders with superior competence, who trust precisely because the risk they take renders that signal credible. The effectiveness of the signaling is determined by the leaders' knowledge of their subordinates' trustworthiness, the impact of subordinates' felt trust, and managers' overconfidence.