

GIZEM SAKA

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TEACHING EXPERIENCE

WELLESLEY COLLEGE

Visiting Assistant Professor of Economics July 2011-present

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

Visiting Assistant Professor of Economics (Student Evaluations out of 5) July 2008-June 2011

- Introduction to Microeconomics (4.20, 4.31, 4.54)
- Experimental Economics (4.86)
- Economics of Strategy (4.73, 4.41)

KOC UNIVERSITY

- Intermediate Macroeconomics (n/a) July 2009

TEPPER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

- Macroeconomics, MBA level (3.05, 4.50) Fall 2005, Spring 2006

JOHNSON GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT, CORNELL UNIVERSITY

- Strategy, MBA level (4.76, 4.04) Fall 2004, Spring 2005

TEACHING AWARDS

Howard and Abby Milstein Graduate Teaching Assistantship Award, Cornell University 2001-2002

Ernest Liu Family Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, Cornell University 2000-2001

EDUCATION

CORNELL UNIVERSITY, Ithaca, NY

Ph.D. in Economics (Behavioral & Experimental Economics) January 2008

Master of Science in Economics May 2004

KOC UNIVERSITY, Istanbul, Turkey

Bachelor of Arts in Economics May 1999

PUBLICATIONS:

- ***Popular media: Monthly column "The Decision Lab" for Psychology Today.com***

Perils of Expertise. May 2011

Why does studying economics hurt ethical inclinations? April 2011

Red Pill, Blue Pill: What if pharmacology could change your economic preferences? March 2011

The downside of generosity. February 2011

Is altruism making people dishonest? Chosen an "Essential Read" by editors January 2011

To prevent procrastination, watch your friends. Chosen an "Essential Read" by editors December 2010

- ***"Two Undesirable Consequences of Unfairness: Poor performance and poor ethics in the laboratory," International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences, Volume 5 (7): 19-28, 2010.***

Abstract: We conduct an experimental study on cheating behavior, and establish that people's decision to be dishonest does not only depend on economics consequences. A first round dictator game, where Senders allocate a given pie between themselves and an anonymous Receiver, establishes the altruism level of Senders and the fair treatment of Receivers. Participants then proceed to play a trivia game where their actual performance is recorded, as well as their self-reported performance (the difference becoming a measure of dishonesty). We find that those who are altruistic do cheat more in a subsequent game compared to less altruistic Senders. We find that unfair treatment leads to poor performance in a trivia game. We also establish unfair treatment to trigger dishonesty for Receivers. Therefore, dishonesty becomes a deliberate action that participants can manipulate as a tool to react to past unfair events.

- ***“Essays in Procrastination, Commitment and Fairness,” VDM Publishing, 2009.***

Abstract: This book consists of behavioral and experimental work on self-control problems, as well as effects of reputation on fairness considerations. Chapter 1 presents a theoretical model of task performance behavior where people have time-inconsistent preferences. The main premise is that the likelihood to procrastinate and to take measures to prevent procrastination might change as individuals join groups. Chapter 2 is an experiment that tests a question suggested in Chapter 1: Do people’s procrastination behavior change in groups? If people rely on costly devices to counteract self-control problems, do groups mitigate or exacerbate this reliance? Why are commitment devices underutilized? The third chapter takes on another behavioral topic and shows that past behavior might affect people’s fairness judgments. Including information of past play, we analyze rejection rates in ultimatum games and we observe that reputation matters.

In progress:

- ***“Finding ways to overcome self-control problems: Experimental tests on procrastination.” Submitted to the Journal of Experimental Analysis of Behavior.***

Abstract: One way to overcome procrastination is to use commitment devices. People self-impose costly deadlines to overcome procrastination, but do so ineffectively. Two questions follow this observation: 1) What is the underlying reason for under-commitment? 2) How can the ineffectiveness in commitment be cured? Regarding the first question, we wonder whether it’s a self-serving bias that prevents the individual to accept his need for commitment, or an inability to see the potential value in commitment. In Study 1 we establish the presence of self-serving biases by making people choose deadlines for someone else. People make quite efficient commitment decisions for others, indicating their understanding of the benefits of committing. In light of this insight, we design Study 2 where people make a non-binding commitment decision for others right before making a similar decision for themselves. We observe significant increases in effective commitment and performance. Answering our second question, we find that one way to overcome procrastination and improve welfare is to try to solve someone else’s procrastination problem first.

- ***“Moral Compensation: Honest egoists and cheating altruists,” 2011. Featured in the Vermont Public Radio. “Exploring the connection between Altruism and Cheating,” February 13, 2011.***

Abstract: This study refines the causes of dishonesty. Studies on dishonesty claim that people become dishonest when they meet wealthier counterparts, and when the perceived cost that deception creates for the other party is small. By controlling the external rewards (selfish reasons), expected wealth of the counterpart (inequity reasons); and the cost of deception for the counterpart (no harm principle); we still get a systematic difference in dishonest behavior. Our results suggest that people cheat as a response to past unfair behavior (reciprocity motive). We decompose dishonest behavior into these components and claim that people use dishonesty when they believe that a previous allocation has not been ‘fair’ or ‘moral’.

- ***“No good deed goes unpunished: Why are generous people punished severely?” Working paper, 2011***

Abstract: There is considerable evidence on reciprocal concerns affecting economic decision-making: People punish unkind behavior and reward kind behavior, even when doing so harms their own material well-being. In a pilot study Proposers and Responders play the standard ultimatum game over 8 rounds, without repeated matching. In each round, the Responder is presented with information about the Proposer’s past offers and the Responder sees the current offer of the Proposer. Rejection rates are explained by the past offers the Responders have seen in earlier rounds of play. In a survey designed to finesse reactions to different offers, we observe that more fair offers from a Proposer in the past increases the rejection rate of a given offer. In light of pilot data, we design two other games: First a third-party punishment game is played while a Proposer’s past offers are observed by the third party; and second, Responder communication in regards to past Proposer behavior is manipulated.

HONORS

Sage Fellowship, Cornell University	1999-2000, 2002-2003
Vehbi Koc Scholar, Koc University	1999

PRESENTATIONS

University of Cambridge, UK (2010)
University of Rhode Island (2010)
Middlebury College (2009)

OTHER TEACHING EXPERIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS, CORNELL UNIVERSITY

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|---|--------------------------|
| ■ Introduction to Microeconomics (4.32, 4.55) | Spring 2004, Spring 2001 |
| ■ Intermediate Macroeconomics (4.56) | Fall 2003 |
| ■ Introduction to Macroeconomics (4.27) | Spring 2002 |
| ■ Public Finance (n/a) | Fall 2011 |
| ■ Intermediate Microeconomics (4.74) | Fall 2000 |

DEPARTMENT of ECONOMICS, KOC UNIVERSITY

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| ■ Introduction to Macroeconomics | Spring 98 |
| ■ Introduction to Microeconomics | Fall 97 |

Updated: May 2011