

CEREN BENGÜ ÇIBİK

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EDUCATION

PhD in Economics Department of Economics, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK	09.2019 – 06.2023 (Expected)
Master of Research (MRes) in Economics Department of Economics, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK	09.2017 – 06.2019 Distinction
Master of Arts (MA) in Economics Department of Economics, Sabanci University, Istanbul, Turkey	09.2015 – 06.2017 GPA: 3.61/4.00
Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Economics Minor Honour Degree in Psychology Department of Economics, Sabanci University, Istanbul, Turkey	09.2010 – 06.2015 GPA: 3.54/4.00
Visiting Student in Economics Department of Economics, University of Tilburg, Tilburg, Netherlands	01.2014 – 06.2014

RESEARCH FIELDS

Primary fields : Behavioural Economics, Experimental Economics,

Secondary fields : Political Economy, Language and Text Analysis

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant, London School of Economics Richard Layard and Maria Cotofan, Center for Economic Policy	04.2021 – 01.2022
Research Assistant, University Warwick Thijs Van Rens, Department of Economics	05.2021 – 01.2022
Research Assistant, University Warwick Oyinlola Oyebede, Medical School	09.2021 – 01.2022
Research Assistant, University Warwick Robert Akerlof, Department of Economics	05.2019 – 01.2020
Research Assistant, Sabanci University Çağla Aydın, Department of Psychology	01.2013 – 06.2015

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Senior Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Warwick Courses: Mathematical Techniques, Statistical Techniques, Behavioural Economics and its Applications (Undergraduate level)	09.2018 – present
Graduate Teaching Assistant, Warwick Business School Course: Fundamentals of Economic Behaviour (Postgraduate level)	09.2020 – 12.2020

Graduate Teaching Assistant, Sabanci University
Courses: Microeconomics I, Microeconomics II, Econometrics,
Industrial Organisations, Law and Economics (Undergraduate level)

09.2015 – 06.2017

Warwick Business School, Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award

2020/2021

University of Warwick, Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award

2021/2022

WORKING PAPERS

“Avoiding Dissonant Information” (Job Market Paper)

In an increasingly polarized world, we might wonder how we can push people back towards consensus. One argument is that exposure to a balanced set of arguments would help, but we also know that individuals may seek to avoid contrary viewpoints. With this in mind, I examine whether prior exposure to dissonant information drives information avoidance. More specifically, I focus on the outlook towards abortion and two main beliefs on abortion: pro-life and pro-choice. In experiments with US respondents, I first vary the prior exposure to information: whether the information participants receive is in line with or contrary to their beliefs. In the following stage, I measure the avoidance of dissonant information by assigning all participants a dissonant article and asking participants to indicate their willingness to pay to switch the dissonant article with the consonant one. I find that 43% of the participants are willing to avoid dissonant information at a material cost of 44% of their experimental budget. Prior exposure to dissonant information is insignificant, however, what matters is the beliefs. My results suggest that pro-life participants are willing to spend a substantially higher proportion of their experimental budget (10%) to avoid dissonant information than pro-choice participants. It suggests that no matter what prior information a person has been exposed to, the belief they currently hold explains the intensity of information avoidance. I also provide evidence on the main motivation driving information avoidance. Text analysis of people’s reasoning behind their decision to avoid dissonant information suggests that anticipation of negative emotions due to exposure to dissonant information acts as a key mechanism driving information avoidance. It also explains the difference in willingness to pay among opposing belief groups. Generalizing beyond positions on abortion, it seems likely that any attempt to build consensus through the provision of balanced or competitive sources of information will suffer from an individual’s willingness to pay to avoid contrary information.

“Saliency, Dishonesty and Competition” (with Daniel Sgroi)

If we want greater honesty in society is it better to remind those who have been dishonest in the past of their past dishonesty? Or will this merely normalize past dishonesty? We provide a statistical investigation of the role of the saliency of (dis)honesty in future dishonest behaviour in a multi-wave pre-registered experiment with 1,260 subjects. In the first wave, we vary the saliency of subjects’ past dishonesty and explore the impact on behaviour in tasks that include the scope to lie. In the second wave, we vary the degree of competitiveness in one of our core tasks to further explore the interactions between saliency, (dis)honesty, and competition. We derive two main testable hypotheses based on our rational choice model: i) Does cognitive dissonance induced through the saliency of past (dis)honesty affect future dishonest behaviour? and ii) how does this effect change if the decision environment is based on a competitive setting? We find that in a single-player non-competitive task being asked to recall experiences involving honesty or dishonesty reduces future dishonesty. This is true when we compare both games in wave 1 of our experiment and when we purposefully make one of our tasks more competitive in wave 2. On the other hand, in a competitive environment in which subjects could earn more by lying to their counterparts, inducing them to think more about (dis)honesty pushes them towards becoming more dishonest. Attempting to derive policy implications from our findings we would urge caution when attempting to use salience as a weapon against dishonesty. This can easily backfire especially in competitive contexts, forcing dishonest individuals to accept their true nature in order to avoid cognitive dissonance and make it easier for them to behave dishonestly in the future.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

“Failure to Accept Good Advice” (with Daniel Sgroi and David Ronayne) *draft in preparation*

Often advice will be ignored because it is seen to be bad advice: advice that might reduce utility. But, when advice is guaranteed to raise utility, it can be hard to understand why it might be ignored. We investigate if, when, and why good advice, that is advice that is guaranteed to raise utility, is ignored in a controlled online experiment. In our experiment, subjects (advisees) completed effort-based and luck-based tasks, and then had the choice to submit either their own score or that of another, the high-scoring subject (advisers). Good advice was ignored: about 2 to 12% of the time depending on the choice environment: Advisees chose to submit their own score instead of higher-scoring advisers, reducing their payoff. When the adviser was superior in luck rather than skill, good advice was ignored more often. Advisees seemed to trade off their irrationality with the value of the advice. When the material gain of the advice was bigger, advisees followed the good advice more frequently. We do not find any relation between the propensity to ignore good advice and the three main behavioural forces pre-registered in our Analysis Plan in AEA RCT Registry: envy, stubbornness, and the sunk cost fallacy. We also present evidence on the effect of uncertainty and outcome detachment on ignoring good advice. While uncertainty in payoffs did not affect the propensity to ignore good advice, advisees ignored good advice more often when the advice was presented as an outcome of a separate event. This result indicates that as advisees were able to detach themselves from the task, higher-order uncertainty in terms of ambiguity of the outcomes increased the irrational behaviour. These findings have significant policy ramifications. Major social and political events have recently occurred, including Brexit in the UK, the 2016 Presidential elections, and the global response to the Covid-19 outbreak, which was largely brought on by the public ignoring experts' recommendations. Our experiment suggests two potential solutions to this societal issue including selecting superior specialists and altering the decision-making atmosphere so that people feel more included in the process.

“Eat your veggies, Coventry: Encouraging consumer choice for a shift to a healthier diet, RCT Analysis” (with Thijs Van Rens, Oyinlola Oyebede, Lukasz Walasek, Redzo Mujcic, Martine Barons, Petra Hanson, Lena Alkhudairy, Rob Lillywhite, Thomas M. Barber) *applying for funding*

In this project, we aim to identify the barriers and potential solutions to increasing fruit and vegetable intake and to nudge socio-economically disadvantaged people into healthier and plant-based diets. We collaborate with Warwickshire County Council and Coventry City Council to investigate these barriers among the population of Coventry. We aim to improve the availability, accessibility, and affordability of fruit and vegetables and provide information related to the health benefits of a healthy diet. We will set up a mobile food van to sell fruit and vegetables in chosen neighbourhoods. We will randomise various treatment interventions (related to price environment and information provision) in these neighbourhoods. We will introduce lower prices for healthy products, ensure that every household has access to these products on any day of the week, and increase awareness related to the health consequences of unhealthy products.

Attribution Bias by Gender (with Alessandro Castagnetti, James Fenske and Karmini Sharma)

data collection stage

We investigate the existence of attribution bias against women in a principal-agent framework. In many settings, economic outcomes depend on the competence and effort of the agents involved, and also on luck. When principals assess agents' performance, they can suffer from attribution bias by gender: male agents may be assessed more favourably than female agents because males will be rewarded for good luck, while women are punished for bad luck. In this research, we will conduct an online experiment to test whether principals judge agents' outcomes differently by gender depending on how they attribute success and failure differentially to their agents' abilities. Agents perform effort tasks for the principals and the realized outcomes depend on both the agents' performance and luck. Principals then assess agents' performance and decide what to pay the agents. We expect to observe that principals' payments to agents and their beliefs about agents' performance are heavily influenced by realized outcomes, including luck and performance components. If principals suffer from attribution bias by gender, principals pay significantly higher amounts of money to male agents than female agents when they perform the same, but luck works in favour of male agents. Additionally, considering the growing literature on the economics of gender, we will investigate if the gender of the principal plays a role in the emergence of attribution bias.

CONFERENCES & PRESENTATIONS

European Economic Science Association (ESSA), Bologna, Italy (2022)

CAGE Summer Conference, Warwick, UK (2022)

Warwick Behavioural Reading Group (2021)

Warwick PhD Forum (2021, 2020, 2019)

Decision Research at Warwick – DR@W Seminar Series (2020)

SKILLS

Language : English (Fluent), Turkish (Native)

Modelling and Analysis : STATA, Python, SPSS

Experimental Programming : OTree, Z-tree, Qualtrics

Software and Tools : LaTeX, Microsoft Office

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

University of Warwick, Skeoch Postgraduate Scholarship 2019 – present
University-based scholarship for successful PhD students (maintenance & tuition fees)

University of Warwick, Department of Economics 2017 – 2019
Departmental scholarship for MRes students (maintenance & tuition fees)

Sabanci University, Sabanci Postgraduate Research Scholarship 2015 – 2017
Departmental scholarship for MRes students (maintenance & tuition fees)

Sabanci University, Metin Sabanci Outstanding Student Scholarship 2010 – 2015
Full scholarship based on the academic success obtained through the nationwide university entrance exam in 2010 – Metin Sabanci Scholarship

University of Warwick, Discretionary Research Fund 2021/2022
Awarded £4000 to use for my research

University of Warwick, Global Research Priorities 2021/2022
Awarded £2000 to use for my research

OTHER POSITIONS

PhD Representative of the Advisory Board of Global Research Priorities 2021 – present
Behaviour, Brain and Society, University of Warwick

Organiser, Inter-disciplinary Behavioural Economics PhD Reading Group 2020 – present
Global Research Priorities, University of Warwick

Affiliated with Dr@w (Decision Research at Warwick) 2020 – present
Behaviour, Brain and Society, Global Research Priorities, University of Warwick

REFERENCES

Daniel Sgroi

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