

MELIS KARTAL

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VIENNA UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

Current Position Assistant Professor of Economics, Vienna University of Economics and Business (2016-)

Previous Position Assistant Professor of Economics, University of Vienna (2012-2016)

Education

Ph.D. in Economics, New York University, 2006-2012

Thesis Title: Essays in Microeconomic Theory and Experimental Economics

M.A. in Economics, Bogazici University, 2004-2006

B.A. in Business Administration, Bogazici University, 2000-2004

Teaching and Research Fields

Experimental Economics, Political Economy, Behavioral Economics, Applied Theory

Honors, Scholarships, and Fellowships

2013	Research Mobility Program Award, University of Vienna
2013	Heinrich Graf Hardegg Stiftung Research Grant
2006-2012	McCracken Fellowship, New York University
2006-2010	Summer Fellowship, New York University
2011	Dean's Travel Grant, New York University

Publications

“A Comparative Welfare Analysis of Electoral Systems with Endogenous Turnout”, *Economic Journal*, 125(587): 1369-1392, September 2015

“Laboratory Elections with Endogenous Turnout: Proportional Representation versus Majoritarian Rule”, *Experimental Economics*, 18(3): 366-384, September 2015

Working Papers

“Honest Equilibria in Reputation games: The role of Time Preferences” Revise and Resubmit at *American Economic Journal: Microeconomics*

Abstract: New relationships are often plagued with hidden information. Previous research has shown that equilibria which reveal information in reputation games typically involve breach of trust and conflict. But are these inevitable for equilibrium learning and cooperation? I analyze informal, self-enforcing relationships where one party is privately informed about her time preferences. I show that there always exist honest equilibria, which fully reveal

information and support cooperation without breach of trust or conflict. I compare these to dishonest reputation equilibria from several perspectives. My results are applicable to a broad class of games.

“Gradualism in Repeated Games with Hidden Information: An Experimental Study”
(with Wieland Mueller and James Tremewan)

Abstract: A sender and a receiver play in a trust-game type of setting where the sender does not fully know the trustworthiness of the receiver. We show that equilibrium is characterized by “gradualism” in trust under reasonable conditions: The sender starts with a low level of trust and increases the trust level gradually as long as the receiver returns. This type of strategy enables perpetual high cooperation between the sender and the trustworthy receiver after a “testing” phase. We conduct a series of experiments to empirically evaluate the role gradualism plays in games ridden with hidden information. We find strong evidence that senders use the gradualist strategies that are consistent with our equilibrium prediction. Moreover, we find that using such strategies makes senders better off than non-equilibrium strategies, given the observed receiver behavior in the lab.

“An offer you can refuse: the effect of transparency with endogenous conflict of interest”
(with James Tremewan)

Abstract: This paper studies the effects of transparency on information transmission and decision-making theoretically and experimentally. We develop a simple model in which a decision maker seeks the advice of a better-informed adviser. Before giving advice, the adviser may choose to accept a side payment from a third party, where accepting this payment binds the adviser to give a particular recommendation, which may or may not be dishonest. Transparency enables the decision maker to learn the decision of the adviser with respect to the side payment. Prior experimental research has shown that transparency is either ineffective or harmful to decision makers. The novelty of our design is that the conflict of interest is endogenous as the adviser can choose to decline the third-party payment. We predict that transparency is never harmful and may help decision makers. Our experiment shows that transparency does indeed improve the accuracy of decision making.

Work in progress

“Voting and Information Aggregation with Overconfident Agents” (with Jean-Robert Tyran)

Abstract: The overconfidence effect is a well-established and pervasive bias. A myriad of evidence suggests that people make substantial errors when they evaluate their skills, knowledge, abilities and attributes; in particular, they overrate themselves. While overconfidence has mostly been studied in individual decision-making settings, there is a small and growing literature on the effects of overconfidence on markets. We turn our attention to nonmarket institutions, in particular to voting and the electoral process. Feddersen and Pesendorfer (1996, 1999) showed that even if voting is costless, less informed agents

rationality abstain and delegate the voting decision to better-informed agents. Experimental studies by Battaglini *et al.* (2010) and Morton and Tyran (2011) find that significant numbers of subjects with low-quality information abstain. But are agents willing to delegate when they have subjective beliefs about their knowledge and skills? The aim of our project is to analyze the effect of overconfidence bias on voting and information aggregation.

“An Experimental Study of Lobbying and Institutions” (with James Tremewan)

Teaching Experience

New York University

Spring, 2007 & Fall, 2008	Teaching Assistant, Economics Principles
Spring, 2009	Teaching Assistant, International Economics
Fall, 2009, 2010 & Spring, 2010, 2011	Teaching Assistant, Statistics

University of Vienna

Winter, 2012	Instructor, STEOP
Summer, 2013, 2014	Instructor, Designing and Implementing an Economic Experiment
Summer, 2015, 2016 & Winter 2014, 15	Instructor, Introductory Macroeconomics

Professional Activities

Conference and Workshop Presentations: CESS/CREED Graduate Student Conference (2011), Economic Science Association (ESA) Conference (2011), World Congress of the Game Theory Society (2012), Political Economy Workshop (Zurich, 2014), Econometric Society European Summer Meeting (2014), NYU-CESS Experimental Political Science Conference (2016)

Seminar Presentations: New York University (2011), University of Vienna (2012), University of Southern California (2012), University of Georgia (2012), Universitat Pompeu Fabra (2012), Southern Methodist University (2012), Bogazici University (2012), Ecole Polytechnique (2013), Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (2013), National Research University Higher School of Economics (2014), University of Konstanz (2015), WZB Berlin Social Science Center (2015)

Referee Service: American Economic Review, Experimental Economics, Games and Economic Behavior, Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, Journal of Theoretical Politics, Social Choice and Welfare, Review of Economic Studies

Other Employment New York University the CESS Lab, Research Assistant (Summer, 2010)

Languages English: fluent, German: intermediate, French: intermediate.

References

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