Judgment, Decision Making, and Social Behavior

Cornell University Institute for the Social Sciences

Theme Project Proposal

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I. Overview

The field of Behavioral Decision Research, populated primarily by psychologists, attempts to develop descriptively accurate models of human judgment and human decision making. The field of Behavioral Economics, populated primarily by economists, attempts to incorporate ideas from Behavioral Decision Research in order to make more accurate predictions about economic behavior and economic outcomes. These two fields are clearly closely related. Nonetheless, there is surprisingly little direct interaction between the two fields, and even less collaboration. This lack of collaboration is a major stumbling block for both fields. Behavioral Decision Research is typically motivated as testing hypotheses derived from economics, and yet the research is getting limited input from economists. Behavioral Economics is using insights from Behavioral Decision Research, and yet the research is getting limited feedback from psychologists as to whether it is applying these insights appropriately. This lack of collaboration is more important than ever in the wake of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, because policy makers will be relying on economists more than ever, and economists will increasingly turn to behavioral research to inspire new theories.

Cornell is uniquely positioned to rectify this problem and thereby become a leader in both fields. We have an initial strength in both Behavioral Decision Research and Behavioral Economics. Moreover, Cornell is unique in that the psychologists and economists are actively engaging each other — in particular, there is a pair of seminars, one in each field, and a core of 5-10 psychologists and economists attend both. Even so, while the potential for extensive collaboration between psychologists and economists exists at Cornell, this potential has not yet been realized. Perhaps the main barrier is the dispersed nature of behavioral scholars at Cornell. Behavioral Decision Researchers are spread across at least five colleges, and Behavioral
Economists are spread across at least three colleges. In recent years, there has been a discussion at Cornell of creating a center in behavioral research, in large part to overcome this barrier.

The proposed theme would create a formal apparatus to explore this possibility. It would bring together psychologists, economists, and others interested in understanding social behavior, and identify synergies that emerge when these groups directly interact on a day-to-day basis. The goal is to facilitate long-term interdisciplinary collaboration that will persist well beyond the duration of the project. This theme project would also serve as a vehicle to address a major stumbling block for behavioral research: the lack of communication with other social scientists. We hope to identify interest from other social scientists at Cornell via applications to join. More importantly, project activities will be explicitly targeted at identifying synergies with other social scientists.

II. Intellectual Core

IIA: Background

Modern economic research employs a standard “rational-choice” model of individual behavior. This model has its origins in the work of moral philosophers such as Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham, but the model was formalized over the first half of the 20th century. The classical rational-choice model assumes, among other things, that people care only about themselves (pure self-interest), that people assess risks accurately, that people behave exactly as they plan, and that whatever people do is in their own best interests. The rational-choice model has been incredibly useful, as it provides a single and very tractable framework for analyzing a broad set of economic phenomena. Moreover, the rational-choice paradigm has been influential in other social sciences as well, such as psychology, political science, philosophy, and law.
In the 1960’s and 1970’s, psychologists — most notably, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky — began to question the descriptive validity of the rational-choice model. They demonstrated many ways in which the rational-choice model does not describe well the behavior of real-world humans (in 2002 Kahneman was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in recognition of this work). Their pathbreaking research initiated the new field of Behavioral Decision Research that attempts to develop more accurate models of human judgment and human decision making.

While clearly an interdisciplinary field, Behavioral Decision Research is populated mostly by psychologists. Indeed, the question of how exactly humans proceed in making judgments and decisions is the type of question that interests psychologists more than economists. Economists, in contrast, make assumptions about human judgment and decision making as inputs to their analysis, and the questions of interest are the efficiency of markets and the role of policy to improve the efficiency of markets (and the economy as a whole). Most economists recognize that the rational-choice model is a simplified view of humans, but they typically have the view that departures from this model are likely not important for economic conclusions.

Beginning in the 1980’s, however, a small set of economists — most notably, Richard Thaler and Robert Frank here at Cornell — started drawing from Behavioral Decision Research to point out ways in which the failures in the rational-choice model are critically important for economic questions. Their work initiated the new field of Behavioral Economics that attempts to improve economic analyses by incorporating better underlying assumptions about human judgment and decision making. After a very slow start, this field has really blossomed over the past decade as Behavioral Economists have demonstrated that we can better understand savings-
consumption choices, labor-market outcomes, and many other economic behaviors if we let our analyses be guided by Behavioral Decision Research. In recent years, ideas from Behavioral Decision Research and Behavioral Economics have migrated into other social sciences as well, and research findings from Behavioral Economics routinely make their way into public policy debates and have directly influenced legislation and court rulings.

IIB. The Problem

Although Behavioral Decision Research and Behavioral Economics are closely related, for the most part the two literatures have evolved independently, and there is very little collaboration. This lack of collaboration — or even communication — is a major stumbling block for both fields.

Behavioral Decision Research is now well established and has been for quite some time. However, while Behavioral Decision Research is arguably aimed at economists, and in particular at questioning the underlying assumptions of the rational-choice model, the research is getting very little input from economists. Indeed, with the acceptance of Behavioral Economics into the mainstream in the late 1990s, mainstream economics has evolved away from the classical rational-choice model in the direction of greater psychological realism. Even so, psychologists seem to persist in viewing economics much as it was in the 1970’s and 1980’s. By engaging in active collaboration with economists, Behavioral Decision Research would be more able to address questions that economists currently view as important.

Behavioral Economics has, in a sense, paid more direct attention to Behavioral Decision Research, because the research is typically motivated by Behavioral Decision Research. Even so, Behavioral Economists have likewise sought limited feedback from psychologists as to whether it is applying insights from Behavioral Decision Research in an appropriate way.
Indeed, when Behavioral Economists incorporate ideas from Behavioral Decision Research, they typically do so in a simplified way. Although such simplifications are often required to maintain tractability when applying these ideas to complicated economic environments, it would seem important to get feedback from Behavioral Decision Researchers on how these simplifications might be limiting.

Clearly, there ought to be a more active collaboration between psychologists and economists — to take a more truly interdisciplinary approach. In fact, there is yet another, more important, reason for increased collaboration. When Behavioral Economists have applied ideas from Behavioral Decision Research to specific economic applications, frequently they discover issues that have not yet been addressed in Behavioral Decision Research. A natural response would be to work with Behavioral Decision Researchers to jointly address how to resolve these issues. Unfortunately, such collaboration has rarely occurred. Rather, Behavioral Economists have either relied on introspection or attempted to derive an answer on their own (with some but rather limited success).

Finally, there is a broader issue relevant for both Behavioral Decision Research and Behavioral Economics: the lack of interaction with other social scientists, both in terms of exploring implications of behavioral research for other social sciences, but more importantly in terms of exploring how insights and methodologies from other social sciences might create further synergies. This lack of communication is not by design. Indeed, in the late 1990’s, the typical description of Behavioral Economics was, “incorporating insights from psychology, sociology, and other social sciences into economics.” As time went on, it turned out that, for whatever reason, Behavioral Economists were drawing primarily from psychology, and in fact today the typical description has been reduced to merely, “incorporating insights from
psychology into economics.” The time is ripe to explore once again whether Behavioral
Decision Researchers and Behavioral Economists could exploit synergies by collaborating with
other social scientists.

The general problems and themes described above can be observed in a number of
specific literatures and debates:

A. Assessing risks and making choices between risky options:

The rational-choice model used by economists assumes that humans accurately assess the
risks that they face. In addition, it also assumes that, when making choices between multiple
risky options, they do so according to expected-utility theory — that is, people have a utility
function over final outcomes, and maximize the expectation of this utility. Kahneman and
Tversky’s two most prominent contributions challenge both assumptions. First, in the late
1960’s and early 1970’s, Kahneman and Tversky produced a series of papers that demonstrate
that humans do not accurately assess the risks that they face (for a collection of work by them
and others, see Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982). Then in the late 1970’s, Kahneman and
Tversky produced a body of evidence that contradicts expected-utility theory, and used this
evidence to develop an alternative theory, known as “prospect theory” (Kahneman & Tversky,
1979). Behavioral Decision Researchers have since expanded upon and refined these
contributions, although they have often focused on details that economists consider unimportant
for understanding economic outcomes and assessing public policy.

When Behavioral Economists started to adopt these ideas, they did so in a much
simplified way. Most notably, Behavioral Economists have frequently appealed to prospect
theory, but use only a piece of the theory (e.g., loss aversion) in their analyses. Doing so has
been fruitful in a variety of economic applications — Behavioral Economists have shown how
loss aversion might explain seemingly perverse behavior in financial markets, housing markets, insurance markets, and labor markets (see, for instance, Benartzi & Thaler, 1999; Barberis et al, 2001; Odean, 1998; Genesove & Mayer, 2001; Sydnor, 2008; Camerer et al, 1997). This literature has sought very little feedback from psychologists. In addition, as these applications became more sophisticated, a number of issues emerged that had not been addressed in the psychology literature. Most importantly, loss aversion says that people think in terms of gains and losses relative to a reference point, but in attempting to apply loss aversion, Behavioral Economists discovered that (1) in real-world situations, there are often several plausible candidates for what the reference point might be, and (2) the predictions of loss aversion are often quite sensitive to which of those candidate reference points is assumed. Moreover, unlike most psychological analyses, economic applications frequently involve dynamic environments. In such environments, it is crucial for the theory to specify how the reference point evolves over time, and how people predict this evolution. In principle, these issues would seem best addressed in a collaborative effort between psychologists and economists. Thus far, Behavioral Economists have mostly proceeded on their own, with only limited success.

Finally, it is clear that economists and psychologists have paid very little attention to what other social scientists have to say about how humans approach assessing risks and making choices between risky options.

B. Making choices over time:

In dynamic situations where people make choices at different points in time, the rational-choice model assumes that humans are time-consistent in the sense that they never deviate from their initial plans. Beginning in the 1970’s, psychologists challenged this assumption, finding that people seem to exhibit a time-inconsistent taste for immediate gratification (often labeled
“hyperbolic discounting”) wherein from a prior perspective they plan to behave themselves, but when the moment for good behavior actually arrives, they instead indulge immediate gratification (see for instance, Ainslie, 1975,1992; Benzion et al, 1989).

Behavioral Economists adopted these ideas in the 1990’s (see in particular Laibson, 1997; O’Donoghue & Rabin, 1999). Much as with prospect theory, however, they adopted a much simplified version of hyperbolic discounting that would be tractable in economic applications. This model has proven valuable in a number of economic applications: understanding people’s consumption/saving allocations, the use of credit-card debt and other forms of extremely high-interest debt, the tendency to procrastinate onerous activities, labor-market search behavior, and the use of health clubs (Laibson, 1997; Laibson et al, 2008; Skiba & Tobacman, 2008; O’Donoghue & Rabin, 1999,2001; DellaVigna & Paserman, 2005; DellaVigna & Malmendier, 2006).

Psychological and economic research on making choice over time have evolved independent of each other. Behavioral Decision Researchers have attempted to identify a more precise functional form for the discount function (a detail typically viewed as unimportant by economists for the purposes of using the theory). More importantly, psychologists have suggested alternative explanations for the data on hyperbolic discounting, such as “subadditivity in discounting” (Read, 2001) or “temporal construal theory” (Trope & Liberman, 2003). Thus far, these ideas have not entered the Behavioral Economics literature, in large part because they have not been framed in a way that would enable economists to apply these theories. Increased collaboration with economists could change this pattern.

In Behavioral Economics, again there has been very little concern with getting feedback from psychologists. And again, as the economic applications became more sophisticated, new
issues emerged. Most notably, when people have a time-inconsistent preference for immediate gratification, the impact on behavior depends critically on whether people are aware of their own future preference for immediate gratification. In principle, this issue would seem best addressed in a collaborative effort between psychologists and economists. Thus far, Behavioral Economists have mostly proceeded on their own (an exception is Ariely & Wertenbroch, 2002).

Finally, once again, economists and psychologists have paid very little attention to what other social scientists have to say about how humans approach making choices over time.

C. Concerns for others:

The rational-choice model typically assumes that people care only about themselves. It seems clear, however, that people also have concerns for others, and even mainstream economists have sometimes incorporated a basic concern for others (often labeled altruism). The more interesting question is whether people have more nuanced concerns about others. Do people care about being treated fairly by others, and do they alter their behavior if they are not treated fairly? Do people care if others are being treated fairly, and do they alter their behavior if others are treated unfairly?

Although there is a large literature on equity theory within social psychology, Behavioral Decision Researchers have produced relatively little research on how fairness concerns impact decision making. Behavioral Economists, in contrast, have been quite active in addressing these questions, and a number of different theories have been proposed (see, for instance, Rabin, 1993; Fehr & Schmidt, 1999; Charness & Rabin, 2002). Even so, no consensus has been reached.

This domain begs for active collaborations between psychologists and economists. For the most part, however, economists have forged ahead on their own. More importantly, this
realm also begs for collaborations with other disciplines such as sociology, philosophy, law, and anthropology.

**D. Public policy implications:**

Most economists and many policymakers have inherited from classical liberalism a blanket distrust of policies that are “paternalistic” in the sense of interfering in individual choice. Behavioral research, however, suggests that people make “errors” in their decision making and thus do not always behave in their own best interest. If so, perhaps there is scope for policy to help people make better decisions. Over the past decade, Behavioral Economists have actively debated this question. This question has become even more salient and urgent in the wake of the financial crisis, in which investment mistakes have left many households’ finances in ruin.

The debate has centered on two major difficulties. First, even though we have evidence for the general types of errors that people are prone to make, it is hard to identify that any specific behavior was done in error. Second, even if we are confident that a specific behavior was done in error, we don’t want to mandate a particular alternative course of action because typically we don’t know which alternative action is in a person’s best interest. In light of these difficulties, some economists have taken a strong stance that, absent convincing evidence that people are making specific errors, we should not make any paternalistic policy prescriptions (see for instance Bernheim & Rangel, 2008). Others have advocated paternalism, as long as we proceed cautiously, identifying policies that are likely to push people in the proper direction if they are in fact making errors, but also likely to have very little impact if people are not making errors (see Sunstein & Thaler, 2003; Camerer et al, 2003).

This debate has taken place primarily among economists and a few legal scholars, and it would be valuable to engage psychologists more. Indeed, for many behavioral phenomena, it’s
not even clear whether it represents an error or not. An active collaboration of psychologists and economists and other social scientists might help to resolve some of these issues.

**IIC: The Solution**

Cornell is uniquely positioned to rectify this lack of collaboration between Behavioral Decision Researchers and Behavioral Economists, and thereby become a leader in both fields.

First of all, we have an initial strength in both fields. Cornell has long been a major player in Behavioral Decision Research, and our seminar in the field (the BEDR seminar) has been very successful for many years. Until recently, Cornell has had a somewhat smaller presence in Behavioral Economics. Although the field was arguably born here — in the work of Richard Thaler and Robert Frank — for the most part, there have been only 2-3 Behavioral Economists on campus. Recently, our presence in Behavioral Economics has expanded rapidly, with the hiring of two junior professors in the Johnson School (Ori Heffetz and Ben Ho) and one junior professor in Economics (Dan Benjamin) and plans to hire another in Economics. In Fall 2007, we initiated a separate seminar in Behavioral Economics (that alternates Tuesdays with the BEDR seminar), and this seminar has attracted a broad set of economists and psychologists.

In addition, Cornell is unique in that the psychologists and economists are actually engaging each other. At schools with the best Behavioral Decision Research groups (e.g., Chicago, Duke), the economics groups are not interested. At schools with the best Behavioral Economics groups (e.g., Harvard, Berkeley), the psychologists are not interested. At Cornell, in contrast, there is a core group of 5-10 psychologists and economists that attend both the BEDR seminar and the Behavioral Economics seminar and thus interact weekly. Hence, we have already developed some initial common ground.
That said, while the potential for extensive collaboration between psychologists and economists exists at Cornell, it has not yet happened. Perhaps the main barrier is the dispersed nature of behavioral scholars. Behavioral Decision Researchers are spread across at least five colleges at Cornell, and Behavioral Economists are spread across at least three colleges. The combination of the BEDR and Behavioral Economics seminars gets people together for 90 minutes every week. Unfortunately, informal hallway conversations are where ideas for collaboration are usually conceived, rather than during the seminars themselves. For this group, such conversations are limited, particularly across disciplines, because people do not roam the same hallways.

In recent years, there has been a discussion at Cornell of creating a center in behavioral research, in large part to overcome this barrier. The proposed theme would create a formal apparatus to explore this possibility. It would bring together psychologists, economists, and others interested in understanding social behavior, and identify the synergies that emerge when these groups directly interact on a day-to-day basis. The goal is to facilitate long-term interdisciplinary collaboration that will persist well beyond the duration of the project.

This theme project would also serve as a vehicle to address the lack of communication with other social scientists. Again, Cornell is uniquely situated to address this issue, because our existing relationships between psychologists and economists will permit us to explore synergies with other social sciences together. We hope to identify interest from other social scientists at Cornell via applications to join this theme project. More importantly, project activities — most notably the day-long conferences described below — will be explicitly targeted at addressing synergies between psychologists, economists, and other social scientists.
Team Members

The five initial team members come from multiple disciplines, colleges, departments, and ranks, but they are all experts in either Behavioral Decision Research or Behavioral Economics.

Ted O’Donoghue, Professor of Economics, is one of the leaders of the generation of Behavioral Economists who helped bring the research into the mainstream in the late 1990’s and early 2000’s (and one of the few to have collaborated with Behavioral Decision Researchers on several published papers). He is perhaps best known for his research with Matthew Rabin on hyperbolic discounting that was instrumental in convincing economists that people often inaccurately predict their own future behavior, initiating a long line of research that pursues this theme. He has also been active in debating the public policy implications of behavioral research. O’Donoghue brings to this theme project the skills of an economist trained in developing rigorous mathematical models of behavior, while at the same time he has a serious concern for the psychology that underlies these models, and a desire to test these models on economic field data. He serves as a co-organizer of the BEDR seminar, and he is the founder and co-organizer of the Behavioral Economics seminar. He is also a co-founder of a new annual conference in Behavioral Economics (first meeting May 2009) that is attracting most of the top scholars in Behavioral Economics.

Daniel Benjamin, Assistant Professor of Economics, is a leader of the newest generation of Behavioral Economists. His work is distinctive in directly applying methods from psychology to address questions of interest to economists. His empirical research has quantified the role of politicians’ charisma in winning elections, has shown that individuals with greater cognitive ability are more willing to delay gratification and take risks, and has identified how norms associated with Asian ethnic and black racial identity affect delay of gratification and risk taking.
He has also done theoretical work that demonstrates how a concern for fairness can often generate efficient economic exchange even in situations where purely self-interested individuals would not trade. Benjamin is a co-organizer of the Behavioral Economics seminar.

David Dunning, Professor of Psychology, is a leader among a second generation of psychologists trained in judgment and decision-making research. In his most well-known work, he asks whether people form accurate impressions of their own expertise, knowledge, and ability, and he finds that people hold remarkably inaccurate and inflated views of self. This result has many implications for health, education, workplace issues, and economic choice. In more recent work, he examines the extent to which choices that seem economic hinge more on psychological factors, such as social norms and emotion. In particular, he documents that people trust complete strangers in situations in which the economic analysis would suggest no trust whatsoever. Dunning brings to this theme project a long history of interdisciplinary work, and he has been a regular participant in the BEDR seminar since its inception. He also brings a wealth of experience in organization and programming, given his background as executive officer of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, a 5,600 member international organization.

Robert Frank, the H. J. Louis Professor of Management and Professor of Economics in the Johnson School, is one of the first Behavioral Economists. The lion’s share of work in Behavioral Economics has focused on “errors” in the sense that people would like to follow the prescriptions of the rational-choice model, but fail to do so. Frank’s work, in contrast, has focused on departures from the rational-choice model that people do not seem to regard as errors or causes for regret. People tip in restaurants they will never visit again; they vote in presidential elections; they return lost wallets with the cash intact; and they seem to care not just about absolute consumption but also about relative consumption. In books, articles, and regular
columns in the New York Times, he has explored how these departures from standard assumptions help us to understand a variety of otherwise mysterious behavioral patterns, regulations, and institutions. He is a founding member and co-organizer of the BEDR seminar.

Valerie Reyna, Professor of Human Development, is a leader in using memory principles and mathematical models of memory to explain judgment and decision making. She is particularly well known for a model of intuition that places it at the apex of judgment and decision making, rather than treating it as developmentally primitive process. She is a developer of fuzzy-trace theory, a model of the relation between mental representations and decision making that has been widely applied in law, medicine, and public health. She also helped to initiate what is now a burgeoning area of research on developmental differences in judgment and decision. Her recent work in this area has focused on rationality and risky decision making, particularly risk taking in adolescence. She has also extended fuzzy-trace theory to risk perception, numeracy, and dual processes in medical decision making by both physicians and patients. She is a co-organizer of the BEDR seminar. She is President-Elect of the Society for Judgment and Decision Making, is a fellow of numerous scientific societies, and serves on advisory panels for the National Science Foundation and the National Academy of Sciences.

The remaining team members will be chosen this spring through an open competition. The set of potential participants at Cornell is large and dispersed. Scholars with a known interest in behavioral research could be drawn from Economics, Psychology, the Johnson School, Human Ecology, AEM, and the Law School. In addition, to explore synergies with other social sciences, we would like to recruit scholars from additional disciplines, and we hope that the application process will reveal others on campus who have an interest in participating in this process.
The project will also involve prominent scholars from outside Cornell, as participants in weekly seminars and day-long workshops, as extended visitors at ISS, and as public lecturers. Some possibilities include [names deleted].

III. Project Activities

Year 1 will be the planning year. We will begin with an off-campus retreat at the start of the year to introduce team members to each other and to jumpstart the planning process. We will then continue to meet on a bi-weekly basis to plan the activities for Year 2. During this process, several external scholars will be invited to Cornell during Year 1 to help us refine the project and choose themes for the Year-2 workshops. Year 1 will conclude with major campus kick-off lecture by the team leader.

Year 2 will be the centerpiece of the project. The primary activities will focus on generating cutting-edge collaborative research between team members and affiliates, and exploring ways to expand the impact of an eventual center in behavioral research. These activities will be complemented with teaching and outreach activities.

Perhaps the most important feature of the project is to create an opportunity for psychologists, economists, and other social scientists from all over campus to interact regularly on a day-to-day basis. It is only through regular conversations that we can move towards a common language and truly collaborative research. Hence, a major goal during Year 1 will be to coordinate our schedules for Year 2 such that we are spending the same 50% of our time in our ISS offices.

Year 2 will also involve a weekly seminar series. Seminars serve as a major catalyst for scholarly research. They are even more important for interdisciplinary collaboration, because it
is by discussing the different reactions from different disciplines that people can start to develop a common language and move toward interdisciplinary collaboration. Fortunately, we already have the two existing seminars, and so we will not need to introduce an additional weekly seminar (in fact, the initial team members include 3 of the 6 organizers of the BEDR seminar and both organizers of the Behavioral Economics seminar). However, the theme project will leverage the existing value of these seminars. By encouraging team members and affiliates to participate in both seminars, we will expand the set of people who attend both. We will also advertise the seminars as part of this theme project, and thus identify broader interest that will hopefully persist beyond Year 2. Most importantly, the focus on these seminars will catalyze informal discussions in the hallways of the ISS.

We will complement these weekly seminars with a series of six day-long workshops in the ISS Conference Room. For each of these workshops, in addition to team members and affiliates, we will invite a few prominent external scholars as well as additional scholars from Cornell. In part, these workshops will permit an extended in-depth discussion of a particular topic or problem — e.g., a day devoted to social interactions, or a day devoted to public policy issues. In addition, these workshops will serve as a vehicle to identify synergies with other social sciences. For each topic-oriented workshop, we will identify scholars from other social sciences to include in the discussion. Moreover, we will also discuss during Year 1 whether we want to use one or two of these workshops to focus more directly on potential synergies with a specific discipline — e.g., a day with sociologists or anthropologists. The exact focus of these workshops will be determined during Year 1.

We will also infuse the project with fresh ideas from top young scholars. Specifically, we will invite two young scholars from outside Cornell to join the project as postdoctoral
associates. Ideally, one of these scholars will have a background in psychology, and the other
will have a background in economics. By having these scholars permanently situated in the ISS,
they will enrich and enliven the research environment. Moreover, some of the most active and
novel-thinking researchers are scholars who have recently completed their PhD. An infusion of
youth will be an important way to break traditional bounds and move toward truly
interdisciplinary research.

We will also create the potential for extensive interactions and collaboration with top
scholars from other top universities. While the seminar series and the day-long workshops will
help to promote these interactions, an even better way to do so will be to induce people to make
an extended visit to the ISS — for a few days, a week, or even a month. Much as for team
members, the best way to facilitate collaboration is through extended interactions on a day-to-
day basis.

In addition to these research activities, there will also be complementary teaching
activities. Much as there is the potential for valuable research collaboration, there is also the
potential for valuable teaching collaboration. Indeed, for several years now, we have discussed
informally whether to create a formal curriculum around Behavioral Decision Research and
Behavioral Economics. This theme project can serve as a catalyst to move this process forward.

Among undergraduates at Cornell (and elsewhere), demand for courses in Behavioral
Decision Research and Behavioral Economics is very high. Undergraduates are frequently
turned off by the rational-choice model, and they are delighted to explore ways in which to the
model might be improved. Also, these fields inherently revolve around the types of real-world
decisions that students face in their own lives, which further increases their appeal. It is easy to
imagine an undergraduate concentration in Behavioral Decision Research and Behavioral
Economics, and perhaps even a unique major. Moreover, it would be wonderful to create team-taught courses in which undergraduates could observe first-hand the interaction between psychologists and economists. A similar potential exists at the graduate level, where there is more and more emphasis on producing students who pursue interdisciplinary research. We could potentially create a formal concentration in Behavioral Economics for Psychology PhD’s (or PhD’s from other social sciences), and a formal concentration in Behavioral Decision Research for Economics PhD’s (or PhD’s from other social sciences).

In terms of outreach, this theme project should appeal to those beyond its immediate members. Beyond Cornell, we will reach out to scholars from other top institutions to participate in the project. At Cornell, we will reach out to scholars beyond psychology and economics to participate in the project. Finally, much as behavioral research appeals to undergraduates, it also has appeal to the general public. Hence, during Year 2, we will stage a series of six major, non-technical public lectures. The speakers will be drawn from the weekly seminar speakers, the external participants in the day-long workshops, and the external scholars who make an extended visit to participate in the project.

**IV. Final Products**

The goal of this project is two major final products. The first is truly interdisciplinary collaboration that will extend far beyond the end of the project. Once again, Cornell is well positioned to become the leader in interdisciplinary collaboration between psychologists, economists, and other social scientists. If we succeed, we can expect a series of articles in scholarly journals, and perhaps an eventual book or edited volume as we shape the future of this collaboration.
The second final product is the creation of a center in behavioral research. In part, Year 2 can be thought of as taking this center for a test drive. Indeed, many of the features that we propose are likely to be features of an eventual center: inducing scholars from different disciplines and different locations on campus to spend part of the week together in a common space, importing fresh ideas from top young scholars via postdoctoral associates, facilitating extended visits to Cornell by top scholars at other top universities, and implementing a more coherent teaching curriculum. In addition, Year 2 will also involve activities aimed at identifying ways to broaden the scope of an eventual center. Toward the end of Year 2 and throughout Year 3, we can start making decisions about the exact form that an eventual center ought to take, and ways to pursue funding.
References


Appendices: Biosketches for Team Members

Ted O’Donoghue

**Education:**
Ph.D. 1996, University of California, Berkeley, Economics
A.B. 1990, Dartmouth College, Economics modified with Psychology

**Professional Experience:**
2008- Professor, Department of Economics, Cornell University
2006-07 Associate Professor of Economics, Department of Social & Decision Sciences, Carnegie Mellon University.
2003-08 Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Cornell University
1997-03 Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Cornell University
2004 Visiting Professor, Department of Economics, New York University (Fall Semester)
2000 Visiting Professor, Department of Economics, U.C. Berkeley (Spring Semester)
1996-97 Visiting Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Mathematical Studies in Economics and Management Sciences, Northwestern University

**Honors and Fellowships:**
2003-04 Robert and Helen Appel Fellowship for Humanists
1995-96 Alfred P. Sloan Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship
1995 Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award
1993-94 University Fellowship
1992 Eliot Swan Award for Most Outstanding First-Year Student
1991-92 Flood Fellowship

**Grant Support:**
2005-08 National Science Foundation Grant # SES-0518758
“Collaborative Research on Self Control and Consumer Choice”
2002-05 National Science Foundation Grant # SES-0214043
“Collaborative Research on Behavioral Economics”
2000-01 National Science Foundation Grant # SES-0078796
“Collaborative Research on Behavioral Models of Intertemporal Choice”

**Publications in Refereed Journals:**


George Loewenstein and Ted O’Donoghue, “’We Can Do This the Easy Way or the Hard Way’: Negative Emotions, Self-regulation and the Law,” University of Chicago Law Review, 73, Winter 2006, 183-206.


Publications in Collected Volumes:


Professional Activities:
Associate Editor, Quarterly Journal of Economics, 2005-.
Co-Organizer, First Annual Conference in Behavioral Economics (Berkeley, May 2009).
Program Committee, 2009 Summer Meetings of the Econometric Society (Boston, June 2009).
Member, Russell Sage Foundation Behavioral Economics Roundtable, 2005-.

Courses Taught:
Graduate Behavioral Economics
Graduate Industrial Organization
Undergraduate Behavioral Economics
Undergraduate Industrial Organization
Undergraduate Intermediate Macroeconomics
Undergraduate Policy Analysis
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Professional Experience:
Assistant Professor, Economics Department, Cornell University, 2007-present
Assistant Professor, Economics Department, Dartmouth College, 2006-2007

Graduate Studies:
Ph.D., Economics, Harvard University, 2006
M.Sc., Mathematical Economics, London School of Economics, 2000
A.M., Statistics, Harvard University, 1999

Undergraduate Studies:
A.B., Economics, Harvard University, summa cum laude, prize for best economics student, 1999

Honors, Scholarships, and Fellowships:
2005-2006 Institute for Quantitative Social Science Fellowship
2005-2006 Institute for Humane Studies Dissertation Fellowship
2005-2006 Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Dissertation Fellowship (Honorary)
2004-2005 Harvard Economics Department Chiles Foundation (Merit) Fellowship
2001-2004 Harvard University Merit Fellowship
2001-2004 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship
1999-2001 British Marshall Scholarship

Courses Taught:
2008 Economics 3010, “Microeconomics” (Cornell University)
2005 Teaching Assistant, “Psychology and Economics” (graduate, Harvard University)
2004 Teaching Assistant, “Psychology and Economics” (undergraduate, Harvard University)

Research Papers in Progress:


Publications:


Conference Papers:


Work in Progress:

“Genetic Influences on Economic Behavior” (with Christopher Chabris, Edward Glaeser, & David Laibson)
“Underinference and Overinference” (with Matthew Rabin and Collin Raymond)

Research Grants:

- Cornell Institute for Social Science Small Grant, “Testing the Two-Systems Theory of Anomalous Preferences” (P.I.)
- National Institutes on Aging, Program Development Award, “Social Identity and Preferences” (D. Wise, Program Director; D.J. Benjamin, Co-PI)
- National Institutes on Aging, Contract Grant, “Cognitive SNP Panel: AGES Implementation” (V. Gudnason, PI; D.J. Benjamin, Consultant)
- Harvard Law School’s Program On Negotiation Next Generation Grant
- Federal Reserve Bank of Boston Dissertation Grant for Behavioral Economic Research
- National Institutes on Aging, P01, “Psychological Factors in Economic Lifecycle Decisions” (D. Wise, Program Director; D.I. Laibson, PI; D.J. Benjamin, Consultant)
- Kennedy School of Government Taubman Center Small Grant for research on state government (joint with Jesse Shapiro)
- Russell Sage Foundation Small Grant in Behavioral Economics (joint with Jesse Shapiro)
**Professional Service**


**Presentations (Conferences and Seminars):**

2009
- American Economic Association Annual Meeting (San Francisco, CA)
- **Seminars:** Caltech, UCSD

2008
- American Economic Association Annual Meeting (New Orleans, LA)
- National Bureau of Economic Research Summer Institute (Cambridge, MA)
- Michigan Retirement Research Center Workshop (Ann Arbor, MI)
- Conference on Understanding Economic Decision-Making (Jackson Hole, WY)
- Individual Decisions and Political Process (Montreal, Canada)
- **Seminars:** Yale

2007
- IZA Workshop on Behavioral and Organizational Economics (Bonn, Germany)
- Society of Labor Economists Annual Meeting (Chicago, IL)
- Michigan Retirement Research Center Workshop (Ann Arbor, MI)
- Mini-Conference on Cognitive Economics (Ann Arbor, MI)
- NIA Workshop on Refining Economic Phenotypes for Genetic Analysis (Bethesda, MD)
- American Economic Association Annual Meeting (Chicago, IL)
- **Seminars:** University of Chicago, University of Michigan, Cornell, Middlebury, Michigan State, UT Austin, Texas A&M, UT Dallas, University of Houston, Temple University

2006
- IZA European Summer Symposium in Labor Economics (Ammersee, Switzerland)
- Stanford Institute for Theoretical Economics (Stanford, CA)
- **Seminars:** MIT, University of Maryland, University of Michigan, London School of Economics, Dartmouth College, Cornell, Harvard Business School, Haas School of Business, UC Santa Cruz

2005
- National Bureau of Economic Research Summer Institute (Cambridge, MA)
- **Seminars:** Harvard, Yale
DAVID DUNNING

EDUCATION
Ph.D., Psychology, Stanford University, Stanford, California, 1986
B.A., Psychology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, 1982

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
Cornell University
Assistant to Full Professor, 1986-present
Visiting Appointments
Visiting Fellow, University of Michigan, January-June 2000
Visiting Scholar, SonderForschungsBereich 504, University of Mannheim, June 2005.
Visiting Instructor, Instituts für Wirtschafts und Sozialpsychologie, University of Cologne, July 2008, June 2009

OUTSIDE PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES
Fellow, American Psychological Association, American Psychological Society
Member, Society for Experimental Social Psychology
Society for Personality and Social Psychology
   Executive Committee, 2003-2004; Executive Officer, 2005-2009
Foundation for Personality and Social Psychology; Executive Officer, 2006-2009
Associate Editor, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2000-2002
Guest Editor, *Motivation and Emotion* (March and June 2001)

GRANT SUPPORT
Motivated reasoning without awareness, National Science Foundation. September 1, 2008- August 31, 2011 ($282,792 for three years)
Self, esteem, and social judgment. National Institute of Mental Health. April 1, 1997-March 31, 2001, including no cost extension. ($216,368; 3 years plus continuation)

BOOKS AND MONOGRAPH

PUBLICATIONS: Selected Refereed Journal Articles
Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 105, 98-121.


PUBLICATIONS: Selected Book Chapters, Commentaries, Reviews


Heath, C., Dunning, D., & Suls, J. M. (2005, December 3). Ignorance is bliss: We can’t all be above average—yet most of us think we are. Guardian (U.K.), p. 3.


RELEVANT INVITED PRESENTATIONS (last 10 years)


COURSES TAUGHT

- Psychology and Law, Cornell University
- Research Methods in Psychology, Cornell University
- The Self, Cornell University, University of Cologne
- Cognitive Social Psychology, graduate course, Cornell University
February 2009

Robert H. Frank

On leave as the Peter and Charlotte Schoenfeld Visiting Faculty Fellow, The Stern School, New York University, 2008-09.

Degrees Received:
    Ph.D. Economics, University of California at Berkeley, 1972
    M.A. Statistics, University of California at Berkeley, 1971
    B.S. Mathematics, Georgia Tech, 1966

Selected Publications:

Books


**Selected Articles**


**Awards**

Apple Distinguished Teaching Award, Johnson School of Management, 2005.

Russell Distinguished Teaching Award, presented by Johnson School fifth-year reunion class, June 11, 2004.

2003 Leontief Prize for Advancing the Frontiers of Economic Thought


Fellow, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, 1992-93.


Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Professorship, Cornell University, 1987-1990.

Cornell Merrill Scholars Program, Distinguished Teacher Citation, 1991.
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Provide the following information for the key personnel and other significant contributors in the order listed on Form Page 2. Follow this format for each person. **DO NOT EXCEED FOUR PAGES.**

**NAME**
Valerie F. Reyna

**POSITION TITLE**
Professor of Human Development and Psychology
Director, Laboratory for Rational Decision Making

**eRA COMMONS USER NAME (credential, e.g., agency login)**
VFREYNA

**EDUCATION/TRAINING** *(Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, and include postdoctoral training.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION AND LOCATION</th>
<th>DEGREE (if applicable)</th>
<th>YEAR(s)</th>
<th>FIELD OF STUDY</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clark University, Worcester, MA</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockefeller University, New York, NY</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Experimental Psych.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanford University</td>
<td>Postdoctoral</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Psychology (A. Tversky)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A. Positions and Honors.**

**Positions**
1981-1987 Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Texas, Dallas, TX
1982-1983 Visiting Scholar, Department of Psychology, Stanford University, Stanford, CA
1988-1996 Assistant/Associate Professor, Department of Educational Psychology, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
1996-2000 Associate Professor, Departments of Surgery, Medicine, Public Health, Biomedical Engineering, Telemedicine Program, Mexican-American Studies, Women's Studies, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
2000-2003 Professor, Departments of Surgery, Medicine, Public Health, Biomedical Engineering, Telemedicine Program, Mexican-American Studies, Women's Studies, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
2002-present Professor, University of Arizona Cancer Center, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
2003-2005 Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Texas, Arlington, TX
2004-2005 Professor, Department of Biomedical Engineering, University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, TX
2005-present Professor, Department of Human Development, Department of Psychology, Cognitive Science Program, and Neuroscience Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
2005-present Director, of Extension, Department of Human Development, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
2005-present Co-director, Center for Behavioral Economics and Decision Research, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

**Other Positions and Appointments**
1990-1992 Elected President of the Arizona Association of Chicanos for Higher Education
1996-2005 Director, Informatics and Decision Making Laboratory, College of Medicine, University of Arizona
1996-present Elected Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science
1996-2002 Appointed to the Editorial Board of Child Development
1997-2004 Director, Division of Learning, Technology, and Assessment, Arizona Research Laboratories, Office of the Vice President for Research, University of Arizona
1997-present Elected Fellow of the American Psychological Association Division of Educational Psychology
1998-2001 Director, Bio-psychosocial Core, National Institutes of Health Center, Department of Pediatrics, University of Arizona
1998-present Elected Fellow of the American Psychological Society
1998-present Elected Fellow of the American Psychological Association Division of Developmental Psychology
1998-2001 Appointed to the Editorial Board of Medical Decision Making
2000-2001 Elected President of Association of Women Faculty
2000-present Appointed Associate Editor of Developmental Review
2001-2003 Appointed Senior Research Advisor overseeing research funding, programs, and policies in the United States Department of Education (helped create new federal research agency)
2001-present Appointed to the National Advisory Board of the Cornell Institute for Research on Children, sponsored by the National Science Foundation
2002-present Appointed to the Education Advisory Board of the American Psychological Association
2003-present Elected Fellow of the American Psychological Association Division of Experimental Psychology
2005-2008 Elected Member, Division 3 (Experimental Psychology) Executive Committee and the American Psychological Association’s Committee on International Relations
2005-2009 Appointed Member, Academic Advisory Panel, Stanford Center on Adolescence, funded by the John Templeton Foundation
2006-present Appointed to the Editorial Board of Psychonomic Bulletin and Review
2006-present Appointed Member, Board on Behavioral, Cognitive, and Sensory Sciences, National Academies of Sciences
2006-2008 Appointed Member, National Mathematics Advisory Panel (to advise the President and the Secretary of Education on the conduct, evaluation, and effective use of the results of research); Chair, Standards of Evidence Subcommittee
2006-present Elected Fellow of the American Psychological Association Division of Health Psychology
2006-present Appointed Associate Editor of Psychological Science
2006-2010 Honorary Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Kent, Canterbury, UK
2008-2010 Appointed to the Committee on the Science of Adolescence, of the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine.
2008-Elected President, for the Society for Judgment and Decision Making.

B. Peer-reviewed publications (Selected from over 150 publications).


### C. Research Support.

#### Ongoing

<table>
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<tr>
<th>BCS-0840111</th>
<th>V. Reyna (PI)</th>
<th>September 1, 2008 to August 31, 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Science Foundation</td>
<td>Development of Higher Order Cognitive Processes in Adolescence and Young Adulthood: Social, Behavioral, and Biological influences on Learning.</td>
<td>The main goal of this project is to integrate approaches to neuroscience, cognition, and learning in research on adolescence. Role: PI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANT00370084</th>
<th>V. Reyna (PI)</th>
<th>July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Institutes of Health</td>
<td>Predicting and Improving Memory in the Aged and Cognitively Impaired</td>
<td>The main goal of this project is to extend fuzzy-trace theory to better understand underlying memory mechanisms of healthy aging, mild cognitive impairment, and Alzheimer’s disease. Role: PI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>