Aybike (Mutluer) Mergen
Curriculum Vitae

Present Position

PhD Candidate

Graduate School of Business

Koc University (www.ku.edu.tr)

e-mail: amutluer@ku.edu.tr

Visiting Scholar

Schulich School of Business

York University (www.yorku.ca)

e-mail: amergen@yorku.ca

Education

PhD. in Management and Strategy   Feb 2015 – Ongoing

Koc University, Istanbul, Turkey | Full Scholarship

Thesis: **The Participatory Theatre Framework (PTF) of Leadership**

Doctoral thesis defense scheduled for Spring 2021

Research interests include followership, emergence and effectiveness of leadership, ethical decision making, social and cognitive psychology, cross-cultural studies, impression management, change management, and formal modelling.

M.A. in Political Science   Sep 2011 – July 2013

Sabanci University, Istanbul, Turkey | Full Scholarship

Thesis: **Leader Survivability in Non-Democracies: The Role of Blame-Shifting**

Subjects studied include analysis and research design, quantitative research methods, formal modeling and policy analysis, comparative politics, and political theory.

M.Sc. in Economics   Sep 2010 – July 2011

Tilburg University, Tilburg, Netherlands | Partial Scholarship

Thesis: **Campaign Promises and Adoption of Policies**

Subjects studied include game theory and industrial organization, competitiveness and competition policy, labor and public economics.

B.A. in Economics   Sep 2006 – June 2010

Koc University, Istanbul, Turkey | Full Scholarship

Vehbi Koç Scholar Award, completed two Honors Projects in Economics

Subjects studied include differential equations, advanced calculus, econometrics, game theory, economics of information and contracts (advanced game theory), statistics, and economic history.

Certificates

Change Management – PROSCI   June 2015

Psychology of change, theory and perspectives, change management process, organizational change competency, project management, ADKAR®

Experience

Visiting Scholar   Sep 2017 - Ongoing
Schulich School of Business, York University
Collaborating with Prof. Chris Bell on Participatory Theatre Framework related research projects involving theory building, survey development and validity checks, data collection, and qualitative & quantitative analysis of the collected data.

Research Assistant   Feb 2015 - Ongoing
Graduate School of Business, Koc University
Senior member of the KU Leadership Lab. Collaborating with Prof. Zeynep Aycan on a number of research projects ranging from large scale field data collection to experiment design. Mentoring junior members of the lab.

Consultant   Aug 2014 – Jan 2015
Deloitte, Consulting – Finance Transformation
Conducted an organizational transformation project for one of the oldest and biggest industrial holding groups of Turkey.

Analyst   June 2013 – Aug 2014
EY (Ernst&Young), Advisory – Performance Improvement
Conducted an organizational transformation project, designed as is and to be processes, target operating models (TOMs) and organizational charts for each department, and produced process KPIs, RACI analysis and role descriptions for a leading construction company. Took an active part in a project for developing a strategic road map for Turquality certification by analyzing the as-is condition and determining the necessary projects for a leading confectionery company. Involved in both research and the quantitative analysis processes of a report on the new regulations on Turkish banking sector and their effects on Turkish economic performance in the mid/long-run.

Teaching Assistant   Sep 2011 – Jun 2013
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabanci University
Junior level undergraduate Research Methods courses on statistics, Fall 2012 & Spring 2013
        Hold weekly problem-solving sessions with mandatory attendance.
Humanity and Society I&II, Fall 2011 & Spring 2012
        Hold weekly 90 mins discussion sessions that follow a 45 mins conference by the course instructor on the week's topic. Responsible for course planning, quizzes and homework for the session students.

Tutoring   Feb 2015 – Ongoing
Helping struggling undergraduate students in a wide range of courses such as statistics, microeconomics, macroeconomics, and math.

Selected Research

Understanding the followers of toxic leaders: Toxic illusio and personal uncertainty

Mergen, A., & Ozbilgin, M. (2021). Understanding the followers of toxic leaders: Toxic illusio and personal uncertainty. *International Journal of Management Reviews, 23*(1), 45-63.

Toxic leaders are one of the main threats to the wellbeing of people in the workplace and in society in general, and followers play a critical role in constructing and maintaining toxic leaders. In this narrative review, we draw on Bourdieu's concept of illusio and incorporate it with the social and cognitive psychology approaches in an attempt to frame the dynamic system that sustains toxic leadership through continued support of the followers. More specifically, as we introduce the illusio perspective in a process-relational context to the toxic leadership discussion, we (i) address the allure of toxic leaders as an incentive for followers to join the toxic illusio as a way to cope with their high personal uncertainty, (ii) illustrate the mechanisms and processes that motivate followers of toxic leaders to remain in the toxic illusio once they join. In this context, we also briefly discuss and differentiate between the ethical and moral dimensions of toxic leadership.

Audience roles: An inclusive typology of leadership constituency

Mergen, A., Bell, C., & Aycan, Z. (submitted). Audience roles: An inclusive typology of leadership constituency.

Conventional leadership models tend to be leader-centric with typologies of group members based on differences in the value that followers bring to the leader. Typically, these typologies provide distinctions between supportive followers whereas non-followers are represented relatively monolithically as obstacles or irritants to be overcome, subdued, or expelled. We propose a participatory theater (PT) approach that considers group members' attitudinal and behavioral alignment with the leader to a) inclusively recognize all group members as contributors to the leadership phenomenon; b) provide a typology of roles that includes followers, non-followers, and those in between (i.e., devoted followers, vigilant followers, covert followers, pragmatists, survivors, dissenters, rebels, and apathetics); and c) understand leadership as the emergent product of interactions of role inhabitants with each other and the leader. In this paper, we first review extant literature on leadership and followership with special attention to roles, identifying contributions and gaps our PT approach can fill. We then introduce our PT audience role typology, review the theoretical underpinnings, and describe each role. Lastly, we discuss applications of the PT approach to empirical research in relevant domains of leadership, justice, strategic human resource management, and change management.

Audience role typology: Empirical evidence

Mergen, A., Bell, C., & Aycan, Z. (in progress). Audience Role Archetypes.

In this paper, we present evidence for the existance of the audience role typology from two separate studies. First, we conducted a mixed-methods exploratory study with undergraduate students at the Schulich School of Business in which we used open-ended response format and asked participants to describe the roles that individuals can adopt in a generic leadership setting. These descriptions were then coded by two independent coders for underlying role attributes. Secondly, we developed a tool to assess an individual's audience role based on their level of attitudinal and behavioural alignment with the leader. We conducted a confirmatory survey study on US citizen adults in the

context of the Trump presidency. The results of the latent class analysis of both the coded qualitative data and the assessment tool data strongly supports the proposed theoretical framework and the existence of an audience typology.

Toxic illusio in the global value chain: The case of Amazon
Mergen, A., & Ozbilgin, M. (in press). Toxic illusio in the global value chain: The case of Amazon. In S. Metin Camgoz & O. Tayfur Ekmekci (Eds.) *Destructive Leadership and Management Hypocrisy: Advances in Theory and Practice.* Emerald Publishing.

Toxic leadership is often studied from a leader centric perspective, which focuses on the detrimental outcomes of leaders with destructive ideas and practices. In this chapter, we provide a global value chain perspective, which accounts for effects of corporate leadership from inception of a product or service idea to its consumption across the value chain. In particular, we demonstrate how toxic leadership is sustained through an illusio, i.e., the allure of the often charismatic leadership discourse, which is rendered unaccountable due to lack of global regulation of GVCs. This allows for global organisations and loxic leaders to exploit weaknesses in national level regulation. Drawing on a netnographic study of toxic leadership in Amazon, we demonstrate how toxic leadership created the illusion of success while perpetuating toxicity and exploitation across their complex value chains internationally.

Invited Talks

Mergen, A., & Ozbilgin, M. (2021) *Invited speaker*. Understanding the followers of toxic leaders: Toxic illusio and personal uncertainty. CISEI Centre at University of Southampton, UK, February.

Theses

The Participatory Theatre Framework of Leadership
PhD in Management, Koç University, Ongoing
Advisor: Zeynep Aycan
My doctoral thesis, entitled "The Participatory Theatre Framework (PTF) of Leadership", challenges the dominant leader-centric conceptualization of followers and the social group in leadership contexts. My thesis has produced two theory papers, one is in print at International Journal of Management Reviews and the other currently under review at the Leadership Quarterly, as well as an empirical paper in preparation to be submitted for journal publication in Summer 2021. In the main theoretical section of my thesis, I propose a new participatory theatre framework (PTF) of leadership in which leadership is a dynamic phenomenon that emerges out of the interactions of leader(s), followers, and non-followers who are all simultaneously actors and an 'audience' to leadership. Within the working analogy of a participatory theatre, my framework aims at (i) highlighting the existence of an 'audience' that expands beyond followers, (ii) proposing a 'typology' of roles in the audience (i.e., devoted followers, vigilant followers, pragmatists, rebels, activists, survivors, and apathetics), and (iii) proposing a 'topology' of audience members (i.e., social network structures such as leader-favoring majority, divided audience, neutral audience, and leader-favoring minority) influencing the leadership outcomes. In the PTF, leadership is the compilation of individual and collective agencies and the framework itself functions as a multi-level flowchart that operates simultaneously at and across individual (role), sub-group (role group), and group (audience) levels. The second section of my thesis demonstrates that audience members are co-creators of the

leadership phenomena through the agency of devoted followers in the context of toxic leadership (published as 'Understanding the followers of toxic leaders: Toxic illusio and personal uncertainty'). The final section of my thesis presents the empirical evidence for the existence of the audience role typology (preparing for publication as 'Audience role typology: Empirical evidence').

Leader Survivability in Non-Democracies: The Role of Blame-Shifting
MA in Political Science, Sabanci University, 2013
Advisor: Ozge Kemahlioglu
Paper utilizes formal modelling to analyze autocratic leaders' incentives for holding elections as an insurance policy for times of crisis as a blame shifting instrument. It also discusses 4 countries as case studies from Arab Spring.

Campaign Promises and Adoption of Policies
MSc in Economics, Tilburg University, 2011
Advisor: Florian Schuett
Paper utilizes formal modelling to analyze how an electorate with a normal distribution over the policy spectrum would behave when faced with heterogeneous candidates regarding their possibility of lying about their policy bliss points. It also evolves the base model by introducing a possibility of a scandal, in the sense that a lying candidate being exposed.

Personal Information

Date of birth: January 5, 1988
Citizenship: Turkish citizen & Canadian permenant resident
Software: Python, R, LaTeX, MySQL, MPlus, MS Project, MS Visio
Interests: Woodworking and FRP