

# KEREM OKTAR

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## Employment

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### Meta Fundamental AI Research (FAIR)

2025 - Present

Postdoctoral Researcher

Advisor: Asli Celikyilmaz

## Education

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### Princeton University

2019 - 2025

Ph.D. in Psychology

Advisors: Tania Lombrozo & Thomas L. Griffiths

Thesis: *Cognitive Mechanisms of Social Controversies*

### Pomona College

2015 - 2019

B.A. in Economics, Cognitive Science (*cum laude*)

## Publications

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### PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

\* denotes joint authorship

1. **Oktar, K.** & Lombrozo, T. (Forthcoming). How Beliefs Persist Amid Controversy: The Paths to Persistence Model. *Psychological Review*. Preprint: <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/9t6va>
2. **Oktar, K.** & Lombrozo, T. (2025). How Aggregated Opinions Shape Beliefs. *Nature Reviews Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-024-00398-7>
3. **Oktar, K.**, Lombrozo, T.\*, & Griffiths, T.\* (2024). Learning from Aggregated Opinion. *Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976241251741>
4. **Oktar, K.**, Sucholutsky, I., Lombrozo, T., & Griffiths, T. (2024). Dimensions of Disagreement: Unpacking Divergence and Misalignment in Cognitive Science and Artificial Intelligence. *Decision*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dec0000244>
5. **Oktar, K.**, Lerner, A., Malaviya, M., & Lombrozo, T. (2023). Philosophy instruction changes views on moral controversies by decreasing reliance on intuition. *Cognition*, 236, 105434. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2023.105434>
6. **Oktar, K.** & Lombrozo, T. (2022). Deciding to be authentic: Intuition is favored over deliberation when authenticity matters. *Cognition*, 223, 105021. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2022.105021>

7. **Oktar, K.**, Laura, Z., & Leticia, S. (2019). Impact of Increasing Levels of Difficulty on the Generation Effect. *Koc University Undergraduate Psychology Journal*, 4(18), 12-17. [\[Link\]](#)

## PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

1. Foster-Hanson, E., **Oktar, K.**, Lombrozo, T., & Kelts, S. (2025). Psychological Measurement of Technology Ethics Education using the REGAIN Empirical Framework. Proceedings of the 2025 IEEE International Symposium on Ethics in Engineering, Science, and Technology (ETHICS), *IEEE ETHICS*. [\[Link\]](#)
2. **Oktar, K.\***, Byers, B.\*, & Lombrozo, T. (2024). Are Disagreements Just Differences in Beliefs? Proceedings of the 46th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, *Cognitive Science Society*. [\[Link\]](#)
3. **Oktar, K.**, Sumers, T., & Griffiths, T. (2024). A Rational Model of Vigilance in Communication. Proceedings of the 46th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, *Cognitive Science Society*. [\[Link\]](#)
4. **Oktar, K.** and Lombrozo, T., (2022). Mechanisms of Belief Persistence in the Face of Societal Disagreement. Proceedings of the 44th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, *Cognitive Science Society*. [\[Link\]](#)
5. Malaviya, M., Sucholutsky, I., **Oktar, K.**, and Griffiths, T. (2022). Can Humans Do Less-Than-One-Shot Learning? Proceedings of the 44th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, *Cognitive Science Society*. [\[Link\]](#)
6. **Oktar, K.** and Lombrozo, T., (2021). Deciding to be Authentic: Intuition is Favored Over Deliberation for Self-Reflective Decisions. Proceedings of the 43rd Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, *Cognitive Science Society*. [\[Link\]](#)
7. **Oktar, K.** and Lombrozo, T., (2020). You Should Really Think This Through: Cross-Domain Variation in Preferences for Intuition and Deliberation. Proceedings of the 42nd Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, *Cognitive Science Society*. [\[Link\]](#)

## COMMENTARIES

1. Sommer, J., & **Oktar, K.** (2025). Maps by Which We May Not Steer: Why Psychologists Should Expect Low Belief-Behavior Correspondence. *Psychological Inquiry*, 36(1), 60-66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2025.2482347>
2. **Oktar, K.** (2024). Psychology Remains Marginally Valid. *Nature Reviews Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-024-00281-5>

## Manuscripts in Progress

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### MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW

1. **Oktar, K.**, Sumers, T., & Griffiths, T. Rational Vigilance of Intentions and Incentives Guides Learning from Advice. Under Review at *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*. Preprint: <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/khtpy-v1>
2. Wu, A.\*, Liu, R.\*, **Oktar, K.\***, Sumers, T., & Griffiths, T. Are Large Language Models Sensitive to the Motives Behind Communication? Under Review at *NeurIPS* [Neural Information Processing Systems]
3. **Oktar, K.\***, Byers, B.\*, & Lombrozo, T. Disagreement is Not (Just) a Difference in Beliefs. Under Review at *Cognition*.
4. **Oktar, K.\***, Gottlieb-Cohen, S.\*, & Lombrozo, T. Deciding when we cannot know: First-person priority in transformative choice. Under Review at *Open-mind*.

### PRE-PRINTS

... denotes many co-authors on large collaborations

1. **Oktar, K.**, Collins, K. M., Hernandez-Orallo, J., Coyle, D., Cave, S., Weller, A., & Sucholutsky, I. (2025). Identifying, Evaluating, and Mitigating Risks of AI Thought Partnerships. *arXiv preprint* [arXiv:2505.16899](https://arxiv.org/abs/2505.16899)
2. Schoenegger, P., ..., **Oktar, K.**, ... & Karger, E. (2025). Large Language Models Are More Persuasive Than Incentivized Human Persuaders. *arXiv Preprint* [arXiv:2505.09662](https://arxiv.org/abs/2505.09662)
3. Sucholutsky, I., ..., **Oktar, K.**, ..., Griffiths, T. L. (2023). Getting aligned on representational alignment. *arXiv Preprint* [arXiv:2310.13018](https://arxiv.org/abs/2310.13018)

## Awards

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Best Poster Prize	Society for Philosophy and Psychology, 2023
Marr Prize for Best Student Paper	Cognitive Science Society, 2022
Graduate School Teaching Award	Princeton University, 2022
Diversity and Inclusion Conference Award	Cognitive Science Society, 2021
Fletcher Jones Foundation Top Thesis Prize	Pomona College, 2019
Distinction in Linguistics and Cognitive Science	Pomona College, 2019
Pomona College Scholar	Pomona College, 2015 - 2019

## Grants & Fellowships

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Rockefeller Graduate Prize Fellowship      Princeton Center for Human Values, 2023

Title: *A Study of Individual Belief Amid Controversy*

Award: \$110,000 (PI) [research funding, stipend, tuition]

Cognitive Science Research Grant      Princeton University, 2022

Title: *Computational Modeling of Belief Persistence*

Award: \$3,000 (Co-PI) [research funding]

Partisan Animosity Survey Time Grant      Polarization Research Lab, 2022

Title: *Political Differences in Belief Persistence*

Award: Nationally representative sample (Co-PI) [2,000 participants]

Summer Research Fellowship      Pomona College, 2019

Title: *Affective Reactions to Inconsistent Information*

Award: \$4,000 (PI) [research funding, travel]

## TRAVEL FELLOWSHIPS

Conference/Symposium      Society for Judgment and Decision-Making, 2024

Society for Philosophy and Psychology, 2024

NYU Stern School of Business, 2024

Institute for Humane Studies, 2024

Cognitive Science Society, 2022

Summer Institute      Diverse Intelligences Summer Institute, 2023

## Presentations ---

### INVITED TALKS

#### Learning from Opinions in Minds and Machines

- University of Washington (PI: Kleiman-Weiner) 2025
- Meta Fundamental AI Research (PI: Celikyilmaz) 2025

#### How Beliefs Persist When Millions Disagree

- Max Planck Institute (PI: Hertwig) 2024
- Carnegie Mellon (ICSD Talk Series) 2024
- Stanford (PI: Zaki) 2024
- UC Berkeley (PI: Ayduk & Mendoza-Denton) 2024
- UC San Diego (PI: Rossano) 2024
- Harvard (PI: Cushman & Greene) 2023

- Harvard Kennedy School (PI: Minson) 2022
- UCL (Judgment and Decision Making Seminar) 2022

### **Learning from Aggregated Opinion**

- UC San Diego (PI: Lin) 2025
- NYU (PI: Ho & Van Bavel) 2024
- MIT Sloan (PI: Rand & Bhui) 2024
- NYU (ConCats Talk Series) 2024
- Princeton (PI: Vélez) 2023
- Princeton (PI: Crockett) 2023

### **Can Morality be Taught?**

- Bogazici University (Psychology Department Colloquium) 2023
- Princeton (PI: Crockett) 2022

### **Deciding to be Authentic**

- Pomona College (Cognitive Science Department Colloquium) 2020

### **CONFERENCE TALKS**

Fall 2025. Are Large Language Models Sensitive to the Motives Behind Communication? Talk at the Conference on Language Modeling in Montreal, CA.

Fall 2024. Cognitive Mechanisms of Social Controversies. Talk at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Judgment and Decision Making in New York, NY.

Summer 2024. A Rational Model of Vigilance in Motivated Communication. Talk at the 46th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society in Rotterdam, NE.

Spring 2023. Ideological Differences in Belief Persistence. Talk at the Second Annual Meeting on Partisan Animosity in America, New Orleans, LA.

Fall 2023. Learning from Aggregated Opinion. Talk at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Judgment and Decision Making, San Francisco, CA.

Summer 2023. Learning from Aggregated Opinion. Virtual Symposium talk: 45th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, Sydney, Australia.

Summer 2022. Mechanisms of Belief Persistence in the Face of Societal Disagreement. Conference talk: 44th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, Toronto, Canada.

Summer 2021. Deciding to be Authentic: Intuition is Favored Over Deliberation for Self-Reflective Decisions. Virtual conference talk: 43rd Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, Vienna, Austria.

## CONFERENCE POSTER PRESENTATIONS

**Oktar, K.\***, Park, S., & Lombrozo, T. (2024, June). Why do Philosophers Disagree about Disagreement? Presentation at the Society for Philosophy and Psychology.

**Oktar, K.\***, & Lombrozo, T. (2024, February). What Enables Societal Controversy? Presentation at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology.

**Oktar, K.\***, Byers, J. B. & Lombrozo, T. (2024, February). Is Disagreement Just a Difference in Beliefs?. Presentation at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology.

**Oktar, K.\***, Sumers, T.R., & Griffiths, T. L. (2023, November). Trust and Doubt: A Rational Model of Epistemic Vigilance Explains How Inferred Motivations Moderate Inferences. Presentation at the MIT Conference on Directions of Polarization, Social Norms, and Trust in Societies: Perspectives from behavioral sciences.

**Oktar, K.**, Lerner, A., Malaviya, M., & Lombrozo, T. (2023, June). Philosophy instruction changes views on moral controversies by decreasing reliance on intuition. Presentation at the 49th Annual Meeting of the Society for Philosophy and Psychology.

**Oktar, K.** and Lombrozo, T. (2021, June). Intuition is Favored Over Deliberation When Authenticity Matters. Virtual presentation at the 47th Annual Meeting of the Society for Philosophy and Psychology.

**Oktar, K.** and Lombrozo, T. (2021, June). Intuition is Favored Over Deliberation When Authenticity Matters. Virtual presentation at the 47th Annual Meeting of the Society for Philosophy and Psychology.

**Oktar, K.** and Lombrozo, T. (2020, July). You Should Really Think This Through: Cross-Domain Variation in Preferences for Intuition and Deliberation. Virtual presentation at the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society.

**Oktar, K.** and Sher, S. (2019, September). Investigating the Affective Reactions Elicited Through Inconsistency Processing. Presentation at the Pomona College Linguistics and Cognitive Science Thesis Conference in Claremont, CA.

**Oktar, K.** (2018, September). Investigating the Affective Reactions Elicited Through Inconsistency Processing. Presentation at the Pomona College Stover Walk Research Conference in Claremont, CA.

**Oktar, K.** (2017, September). Investigating the Neural Basis of Age Related Deficits in Word Retrieval. Presentation at the Pomona College Stover Walk Research Conference in Claremont, CA.

Gertel, V., **Oktar, K.**, & Diaz, M. (2017, November). Graph Theoretical Approaches Show a Relationship Between Resting State Functional Connectivity in Younger and Older Adults and Phonological Aspects of Language Production. Presentation at the meeting of the Society for the Neurobiology of Language, Baltimore, MD.

Winter, S.B., Rizio, A.A., Dempsey, J., **Oktar, K.**, Diaz, M.T. (2017, November). White Matter Integrity and Language Production in Aging. Presentation at the meeting of the Society for the Neurobiology of Language, Baltimore, MD.

## Teaching

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Instructor Psychology of Justice, Edna Mahan Women's Prison, 2024

- Co-designed and co-taught course on moral judgment and behavior. Material covered cognitive (e.g., moral deliberation), social (e.g., harm aversion), and institutional (e.g., eyewitness testimony) processes.

Teaching Assistant Developmental Psychology, Princeton University, 2022  
Cognitive Psychology, Princeton University, 2021  
Cognitive Psychology, Princeton University, 2020  
Thought and Cognition, Pomona College, 2018  
Lit., Film, and Cognitive Science, Pomona College, 2017

## Press Coverage

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[Nautilus](#): Conspiracy Theorists Can Be Deprogrammed. 2025  
[ZME Science](#): Everyone else's opinion is secretly changing yours. 2025  
[APALA](#): Effective actions to reduce our carbon footprint. [French] 2023  
[Big Think](#): Why it isn't strategic to always be rational. 2022  
[Psychology Today](#): When to Go With Your Gut and Be True to Yourself. 2022

## Leadership, Diversity, & Service

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### LEADERSHIP

Mentor Project SHORT, 2022 - Present  
Ambassador Center for Open Science, 2022  
First Year President Associated Students of Pomona College, 2015

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

President                      Princeton Graduate Turkish Students Association, 2021 - 2024  
Conference Assistant      Anti-racist Research Methods Conference at Princeton, 2021  
Mentor                        Pomona International Student Mentorship Program, 2016

## INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE

Prospective Student Interview Committee                      Princeton University, 2022  
Student Pool Administrator & IRB Reviewer                  Princeton University, 2019 - 2021  
Student Liaison    Pomona Cognitive Science Department, 2018  
Faculty Search Panel Member                                      Pomona Cognitive Science Department, 2018

## AD HOC REVIEWER

### **Journals**

Psychological Science  
Journal of Experimental Psychology: General  
Current Directions in Psychological Science  
Psychonomic Bulletin & Review  
Cognition  
Open-Mind  
Decision  
Scientific Reports  
Psychological Reports  
Humanities and Social Sciences Communications  
International Journal of Psychology

### **Conferences**

NeurIPS (Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems) Workshop on Human and Machine Decision-making  
ICML (International Conference on Machine Learning) World Models Workshop  
ICLR (International Conference on Learning Representations) Representational Alignment Workshop  
The ACM Annual Designing Interactive Systems (DIS) Conference  
The Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Cognitive Science Society  
Society for Judgment and Decision-Making  
Society for Philosophy and Psychology  
The Society for Personality and Social Psychology  
The American Psychological Association



## MENTORSHIP

### Undergraduate Independent Research

Burcu Aydin [Psychology] Bogazici University, 2024 - Present

- Topic: Examining cross-cultural variation in responses to societal dissent, focusing on the Turkish context.

Sungho (Sam) Park [Philosophy] Princeton University, 2023 - 2025

- Topic: Psychological principles of peer disagreements in epistemology. Mentee received a travel grant to present research at SPP 2024.

Joshua Schoenberg [Computer Science] Princeton University, 2022 - 2024

- Topic: Leveraging importance sampling to explain political perception gaps. Now a software engineer at Microsoft.

## References

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### **Tania Lombrozo**

Arthur W. Marks '19 Professor of Psychology

Princeton University

[lombrozo@princeton.edu](mailto:lombrozo@princeton.edu)

### **Thomas L. Griffiths**

Henry R. Luce Professor of Information Technology, Consciousness, and Culture

Princeton University

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### **Molly Crockett**

Associate Professor of Psychology

Princeton University

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