

KEREM OKTAR

Department of Psychology, Princeton University

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Education

Princeton University	2021 - Present
Ph.D. Candidate in Psychology	
Advisors: Tania Lombrozo & Tom Griffiths	
Dissertation: <i>Cognitive, Social, and Computational Principles of Disagreement</i>	
Princeton University	2019 - 2021
M.A in Psychology	
Pomona College	2015 - 2019
B.A. in Economics, Cognitive Science (<i>cum laude</i>)	

Awards

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

Rockefeller Graduate Prize Fellowship	Princeton Center for Human Values, 2023
Title: <i>A Study of Individual Belief Amid Controversy</i>	
Award: \$110,000 (PI) [research funding, stipend, tuition]	
Cognitive Science Research Grant	Princeton University, 2022
Title: <i>Computational Modeling of Belief Persistence</i>	
Award: \$3,000 (Co-PI) [research funding]	
Partisan Animosity Survey Time Grant	Polarization Research Lab, 2022
Title: <i>Political Differences in Belief Persistence</i>	
Award: Nationally representative sample (Co-PI) [2,000 participants]	
Summer Research Fellowship	Pomona College, 2019
Title: <i>Affective Reactions to Inconsistent Information</i>	
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

Publications

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

* denotes joint first- or senior-authorship

1. **Oktar, K.** & Lombrozo, T. (2025). How Aggregated Opinions Shape Beliefs. *Nature Reviews Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-024-00398-7>
2. **Oktar, K.**, Lombrozo, T.*, & Griffiths, T.* (2024). Learning from Aggregated Opinion. *Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976241251741>
3. **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>
4. **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>
5. **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>
6. **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. **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*. [\[Link\]](#)
2. **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*. [\[Link\]](#)

3. **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*. [\[Link\]](#)
4. 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*. [\[Link\]](#)
5. **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*. [\[Link\]](#)
6. **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*. [\[Link\]](#)

INVITED COMMENTARY

1. **Oktar, K.** (2024). Psychology Remains Marginally Valid. *Nature Reviews Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-024-00281-5>

Manuscripts in Progress

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW

1. **Oktar, K.** & Lombrozo, T. How Beliefs Persist Amid Controversy: The Paths to Persistence Model. *Invited to Revise & Resubmit at Psychological Review; Available as a PsyArXiv Preprint*: <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/9t6va>
2. **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. Sucholutsky, I., ..., **Oktar, K.**, ..., Müller, K., Toneva, M., & Griffiths, T. L. (2023). Getting aligned on representational alignment. *arXiv Preprint* [arXiv:2310.13018](https://arxiv.org/abs/2310.13018)

Presentations

† denotes forthcoming

INVITED TALKS

How Beliefs Persist When Millions Disagree

- 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 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

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

[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

LEADERSHIP

Mentor Project SHORT, 2022 - Present

Ambassador Center for Open Science, 2022

First Year President Associated Students of Pomona College, 2015

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

Syllabus Committee Member Princeton Prison Teaching Initiative, 2023 - 2024

President Princeton Graduate Turkish Students Association, 2021 - Present

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
Cognition
Decision
Scientific Reports
International Journal of Psychology

Conferences

The Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society
NeurIPS Workshop on Human and Machine Decision-making
ICLR Representational Alignment Workshop
The ACM Annual Designing Interactive Systems (DIS) Conference

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

- Sungho (Sam) Park [Philosophy] Princeton University, 2023 - Present
- 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 - Present
- Topic: Leveraging importance sampling to explain political perception gaps. Mentee is building on this research for his thesis.
- Burcu Aydin [Psychology] Bogazici University, 2024 - Present
- Topic: Examining cross-cultural variation in responses to societal dissent, focusing on the Turkish context.

Application Mentorship (Project SHORT)

Dung (Derrick) Nguyen [Economics] Fulbright University Vietnam, 2023 - Present

- Mentee received full-ride scholarship for an M.A at University of Trento.

References

Tania Lombrozo

Arthur W. Marks '19 Professor of Psychology

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Thomas L. Griffiths

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

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Molly Crockett

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