

KEREM OKTAR

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Employment

Meta Fundamental AI Research (FAIR)

2025 - Present

Postdoctoral Researcher

Advisor: Asli Celikyilmaz

Education

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

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

Underline denotes mentee | ... elides many co-authors | * denotes joint authorship

1. **Oktar, K.***, Handley-Miner, I.*, Kleiman-Weiner, M., Zollman, K., & Young, L. (2026). Intuitive Theories of Truth. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*. [Pre-print]
2. **Oktar, K.** & Lombrozo, T. (2025). How Beliefs Persist Amid Controversy: The Paths to Persistence Model. *Psychological Review*. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/rev0000583>
3. **Oktar, K.** & Lombrozo, T. (2025). How Aggregated Opinions Shape Beliefs. *Nature Reviews Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-024-00398-7>
4. Sucholutsky, I., ..., **Oktar, K.**, ..., Griffiths, T. L. (2025). Getting aligned on representational alignment. *Transactions on Machine Learning Research* [arXiv:2310.13018](https://arxiv.org/abs/2310.13018)
5. **Oktar, K.**, Lombrozo, T.*, & Griffiths, T.* (2024). Learning from Aggregated Opinion. *Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976241251741>
6. **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>

7. **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>
8. **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>
9. **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-REVIWED CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Note: In computer science, conference proceedings are the primary venue for publications.

1. Wu, A.*, Liu, R.*, **Oktar, K.***, Summers, T., & Griffiths, T. Are Large Language Models Sensitive to the Motives Behind Communication? *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems* [NeurIPS], 38. [\[Link\]](#)
2. 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*. [\[Link\]](#)
3. **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*. [\[Link\]](#)
4. **Oktar, K.**, Summers, 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*. [\[Link\]](#)
5. **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*. [\[Link\]](#)
6. 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*. [\[Link\]](#)
7. **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*. [\[Link\]](#)

8. **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

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. **Oktar, K.***, Byers, B.*, & Lombrozo, T. Disagreement is Not (Just) a Difference in Beliefs. Under Review at *Cognition*.
3. **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

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)

Awards

Ethics Education Research Award
Best Poster Prize

National Ethics Project, 2025
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

Presentations

INVITED TALKS

Learning from Opinions in Minds and Machines

- UW Paul Allen School of Computer Science (PI: Yulia Tsvetkov) 2025
- UW Foster School of Business (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

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

[ZME Science](#): Everyone else's opinion is secretly changing yours. 2025

[Nautilus](#): Conspiracy Theorists Can Be Deprogrammed. 2025

[Forbes](#): A Psychologist Explains The Surprising Truth About 'Gut Feelings.' 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

Service

LEADERSHIP

Mentor	Project SHORT, 2022 - Present
Ambassador	Center for Open Science, 2022
First Year President	Associated Students of Pomona College, 2015
President	Princeton Graduate Turkish Students Association, 2021 - 2024
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
 Nature Machine Intelligence
 Journal of Experimental Psychology: General
 Current Directions in Psychological Science
 Psychonomic Bulletin & Review
 Cognition
 Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin
 Artificial Intelligence Review
 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

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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