

Ensar Acem

acemensar@gmail.com
ensar.acem@khas.edu.tr

sites.google.com/view/ensaracem

OSF: [@g46ym](https://osf.io/@g46ym)
X: [@ensaracem](https://x.com/@ensaracem)

I am a passionate Ph.D. student specializing in the evolutionary and cognitive underpinnings of social behavior. Throughout my academic journey, I have taken part in a variety of interdisciplinary projects with leading advisors. These experiences have allowed me to acquire a wide range of research skills, including proficiency in open science. Moreover, I am an experienced remote researcher. For potential collaboration, please [explore my website](#).

Interests: Cognitive science of religion, cooperation, morality, political psychology, dual-process model of mind.

EDUCATION:

2023 – 2027	Ph.D., Psychological Sciences , Kadir Has University (Moral Intuitions Lab)
2020 – 2023	M.A., Psychological Sciences , Kadir Has University GPA: 3.87 /4.00
2015 – 2019	B.A., Psychology , Ankara University GPA: 3.80 /4.00, <i>The Top Student, Highest Honor Degree</i>

HONORS, GRANTS, & SCHOLARSHIPS:

2023 – 2027	Full Tuition Waiver (Ph.D.), Kadir Has University
2023 – 2027	Research Assistant Scholarship, TUBITAK 1001
2022 – 2024	Research Assistant Scholarship, Templeton Religion Trust Long-Term Research Grant
2021 – 2022	Research Assistant Scholarship, TUBITAK 3501
2020 – 2023	Full Tuition Waiver (M.A.), Kadir Has University
2018 – 2019	ERASMUS+ Internship Grant (two times)
2018 – 2019	Very High Achievement Award, Ankara University (two times)
2016 – 2019	State Scholarship, Republic of Turkey
2015 – 2019	Dean's High Honor, Ankara University (all semesters)
2015	SABANCI Achievement Grant (Renounced)

CURRENT RESEARCH:

2022 – Present



Funded by Templeton Religion Trust (funding ID: TRT0424)

Principal Investigators: Assoc. Prof. Onurcan Yilmaz, and Dr. Ozan Isler

Title: Religion as Universal Moral Compass: Does Religious Belief Promote Behavioral Consistency Across Moral Domains?

Sub-projects:

- 1) Consistency of moral beliefs and behaviors
- 2) Religious group bias in anonymous interactions
- 3) Intention-behavior gap in moral dilemmas
- 4) How do analytic thinking and IQ relate to political ideology and religious belief?
- 5) The test of the dual-process model vs. the counter-normative model of religiosity
- 6) The predictive powers of Moral Foundations Questionnaire-2 in moral behavior
- 7) The effects of supraliminal religious primes on prosociality

Responsibilities:

- Designing research procedure, ethics application, preregistrations, Qualtrics design, longitudinal data collection over Prolific ($N = 1200$ in pretest and 600 in posttest), measuring moral/social behavior using eight economic games, creating visual stimuli, developing supraliminal religious primes (punitive, rewarding, forgiving, neutral), developing manipulation check for religious primes, data analysis & reporting, preparing manuscripts, oral presentations at international conferences.
- Developing the theory of Religion as Universal Moral Compass
- Testing the Supernatural Punishment and Supernatural Monitoring Hypotheses

2021 – Present



Funded by European Research Council, Advanced Grant (ERC-AdG; 101020453)

Advisors: Assoc. Prof. Onurcan Yilmaz, Dr. Ozan Isler, Prof. Simon Gaechter

Project: Contextual and cognitive underpinnings of political polarization in the domain of cooperation

- This project is a follow-up to my master's thesis. I am leading all phases.
- Specifically, designing experiment in Qualtrics, data collection over Prolific for two experiments ($N = 2850$ for each; an equal number of Democrats and Republicans in Experiment 1 and a minimal group paradigm in Experiment 2), using cutting-edge cognitive style manipulations, writing a registered report to *Nature Human Behavior*.
- Testing the Contextualized Strong Reciprocity Model, which compromises the Social Heuristics Hypothesis and the Self-control Account of one-shot cooperation.

2020 – Present



Department of Psychology, Kadir Has University

Principal Investigators: Assoc. Prof. Onurcan Yilmaz, Dr. Ozan Isler

Projects:

- 1) A high-powered experimental test of the Reflective Religious Doubt Hypothesis
- 2) The effects of cognitive styles on moral foundations: A cross-cultural examination
- 3) The determinants of moral courage: The development of the Moral Courage Game
- 4) Left-wing authoritarianism and moral behaviors
- 5) Do meta-ethical beliefs predict moral behaviors?
- 6) The predictive ability of cognitive reflection on cooperation in different religious groups
- 7) The moderating role of resource scarcity on the effects of cognitive styles on cooperation

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:

Summer – Fall 2019



Environmental Health Group, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, University of London (Funded by ERASMUS+)

Principal Investigators: Prof. Robert Auger, Prof. Val Curtis

Project: Evolved Human Motives: A questionnaire validation study

- Ethics application, questionnaire design in MTurk,
- Weekly meetings with the Evolutionary Demography Group (Prof. Rebecca Sear)

2018 – 2019



Experimental Psychology Laboratory, Ankara University (Research Assistant)

Advisor: Prof. Hakan Cetinkaya

Project 1: Temporal SNARC: The effect of time on spatial mental representation

Project 2: Interaction between number and shape size in spatial response time

Project 3: Confounding effect of color in implicit measurements of SNARC

- Designing visual stimuli, creating 7 different experiments in SuperLab 4.0, recruiting participants in laboratory ($N = 500+$), cleaning and analyzing reaction time data in Excel & SPSS, preparing 3 posters, manuscript preparation, weekly lab meetings.

Summer 2018



Social Neuroscience Lab, Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience, University College London (UCL) (Funded by ERASMUS+)

Principal Investigator: Dr. Sarah White

Project 1: Spontaneous mentalizing (Theory of Mind) in autism: An eye-tracking study

Project 2: Spontaneous mentalizing in mothers of children with autism

- Filming video stimuli, running eye-tracking experiments using Tobii Eye Tracker, extracting several types of eye-tracking data from Tobii Studio, data cleaning and analysis in Excel & SPSS, weekly lab meetings.

Summer 2017



Eye Tracking Lab, Department of Linguistics, Ankara University (Internship)

Principal Investigators: Prof. Ozgur Aydin, Prof. Iclal Ergenc

Project 1: The effect of the position of the lexical bundle on working memory

Project 2: Awareness of lexical stress in dyslexic children

- Creating verbal and audio stimuli, recruiting child participants, running an eye-tracking experiment by using SMI Eye Tracker and Eye View 4.7, data cleaning and analysis in Excel & R.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

Fall 2022 **Department of Psychology, Kadir Has University (Teaching Assistant)**
Class: Introduction to Statistics (undergrad-level)

OTHER EXPERIENCE:

- 2021 – Present **Moral Intuitions Lab**
- Academic proofreading – Team leader
 - Eight grant applications & project writing (including ERC Starting Grant and TRT)
 - Academic peer reviewing
- 2020 – Present **Social Media**
- Social media management (multiple Twitter accounts with 45k+ organic followers)

PUBLICATIONS IN PROGRESS:

1. **Acem, E.**, Yilmaz, O. (in press). Moral intuition. In: Allison, S. T. (eds) *The Encyclopedia of Heroism Studies*. Springer, Cham.
2. **Acem, E.** (2023). Does cognitive reflection predict cooperation behavior after a seven-month period? (Unpublished master's thesis). Kadir Has University, Istanbul, Türkiye.
3. **Acem, E.**, Yilmaz, O., Isler, O., & Gaechter, S. (in a registered report submission). Contextual and cognitive underpinnings of political polarization in the domain of cooperation.
4. **Acem, E.**, Yilmaz, O., & Isler, O. (in a registered report submission). Reflective disbelief or reflective doubt: How do cognitive styles affect the belief in God or gods?.
5. **Acem, E.**, Isler, O., Yilmaz, O., & Maule, J. (in a registered report submission). Fearing God or society? On the validity and effects of religious primes on prosociality.
6. **Acem, E.**, Alper, S., Isler, O., & Yilmaz, O. (in submission). Cross-cultural stability of the association between cognitive reflection and political ideology.
7. Dogruyol, B., Velioglu, I., Bayrak, F., **Acem, E.**, Isler, O., & Yilmaz, O. (under review). An Independent Test of the Moral Foundations Theory.
8. Wu, R., Lim, J. T., Ahmed, Z., **Acem, E.**, Chowdhury I., & White, S. (under review). Do autistic adults spontaneously reason about belief? A detailed exploration of alternative explanations.
<https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-267044/v1>

POSTER PRESENTATIONS:

1. **Acem E.**, Sakin M., Cetinkaya H. (2018). *The confounding effect of color in the implicit measures of SNARC Effect*. 1st Annual Cognitive-Experimental Psychology Conference, Ankara University, Turkey.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS:

1. **Acem E.**, Yilmaz O., Dogruyol B., Isler O. (2023). *Heroism as Moral Intuition and Its Relation to Social Behavior*. Fourth Biennial Heroism Science Conference, Tauranga Moana, New Zealand.
2. **Cetinkaya, H.**, **Acem, E.**, & Sakin, M. (2021). *Temporal-SNARC: Time may be of a special way of spatial mental representation*. ICP 2020+: The 32nd International Congress of Psychology, Prague, Czech Republic.
3. **Acem E.** (2018). *Theory of Mind and implicit mentalizing in autism*. 1st Annual Cognitive-Experimental Psychology Conference, Ankara University, Turkey.
4. **Acem E.** (2018). *Sociobiology of incest taboo*. 7th Annual Sociology Conference, Ankara University, Turkey.

INVITED TALKS:

- 2022 *Graduate Education and Internship Abroad*. Mersin University Psychology Students Society.
- 2018 *Improve Your Career Abroad: How and Why Erasmus+ Internship?* Ankara Uni. Psychology Students Society.

CERTIFICATES:

- 2023 Improving Your Statistical Questions, Eindhoven University of Technology (Prof. Daniel Lakens)
- 2021 Introduction to R, DataCamp
- 2021 Introduction to Statistics in Spreadsheets, DataCamp
- 2020 The Data Scientist's Toolbox, Johns Hopkins University
- 2020 Understanding Medical Research, Yale University
- 2019 Improving Your Statistical Inferences, Eindhoven University of Technology (Prof. Daniel Lakens)
- 2019 Introduction to Python, Ankara University Neuroscience Society
- 2015 Advanced Computer Skills, Ministry of Education, Turkey

TECHNICAL SKILLS:

- **Eye-tracking:** Tobii Eye Tracker, Tobii Studio, SMI Eye Tracker, BeGaze.
- **Experimental design:** SuperLab, Qualtrics.
- **Online data collection:** Prolific, Qualtrics, Survey Monkey, Google Forms.
- **Statistical analysis:** GPower, SPSS, JASP, Jamovi, R (intermediate), Mplus (beginner).
- **Programming:** Python (beginner).
- **Reference management:** Zotero.
- **Social media management:** Twitter, TweetDeck.
- **Image editing – stimuli design:** PowerPoint, Pixlr X, Adobe Photoshop (intermediate).
- **Web design:** Wordpress, Google Sites, Blogger, Wix.
- **Other computer skills:** MS Office, MS Teams, Google Suite, Zoom, Slack, Teamviewer, etc.
- **Languages:** Turkish, English.

REMOTE COOPERATION:

- Consultancy (academic and professional)
- Online data collection (US/UK/Turkey)
- Lab studies/interviews (Turkey)
- Survey & experimental design (Qualtrics, etc.)
- Stimuli design (visual, audio)
- Data analysis & report
- Academic writing
- Grant writing & applications
- Proofreading & editing
- IRB procedures
- Project/Lab manager
- Social media manager

AFFILIATIONS:

- The Center for the Science of Moral Understanding, University of North Carolina ([Affiliate](#))
- The Moral Intuitions Lab at Kadir Has University ([Research Assistant](#))

NON-PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS:

- Blogging, chess, cinema, poetry, social media.
- Philosophy of science, philosophy of state & society, political economy, sociology of law, theoretical physics.

PERSONAL VALUES:

- Kindness, intellectual humility, open-mindedness, courage, freedom.

REFERENCES:

Assoc. Prof. Onurcan Yilmaz

Moral Intuitions Lab
Director
Kadir Has University
Email: onurcan.yilmaz@khas.edu.tr
[Website](#)

Dr. Sarah White

Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience
University College London
Email: s.white@ucl.ac.uk
[Website](#)

Dr. Ozan Isler

School of Economics
The University of Queensland
Email: o.isler@uq.edu.au
[Website](#)

Prof. Adil Saribay

Dept. of Psychology
Departmental Head
Kadir Has University
Email: adil.saribay@khas.edu.tr
[Website](#)

Prof. Hakan Cetinkaya

Dept. of Psychology
Ankara University
Email: cetinkayah@ankara.edu.tr
[Website](#)

Asst. Prof. Burak Dogruyol

Dept. of Psychology
Kadir Has University
Email: burak.dogruyol@khas.edu.tr
[Website](#)

Prof. Robert Aunger

Environmental Health Group
London School of Hygiene & Tropical
Medicine – University of London
Email: Robert.Aunger@lshtm.ac.uk
[Website](#)

Prof. Ozgur Aydın

Dept. of Linguistics
Ankara University
Email: aydino@ankara.edu.tr
[Website](#)

Prior to contacting my references, please reach out to me. This will allow me to ensure their availability and provide any necessary context. For more information and collaboration opportunities, [visit my website](#).

Last update: 2023-09-09

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