

# Ensar Acem

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I am a graduate student with a deep interest in the evolutionary and cognitive underpinnings of social behavior. Throughout my studies and internships, I have taken part in a variety of interdisciplinary projects with leading advisors. These experiences allowed me to acquire a wide range of research skills, including open science practices.

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

## EDUCATION:

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- 2020 – 2023      **MA., Psychological Sciences**, Kadir Has University ([Moral Intuitions Lab](#))  
GPA: 3.87 /4.00
- 2015 – 2019      **BA., Psychology**, Ankara University  
GPA: 3.80 /4.00, *The Top Student, Highest Honor Degree*

## GRANTS, HONORS, & SCHOLARSHIPS:

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- 2022 – 2024      Research Assistant Scholarship, Templeton Religion Trust Long-Term Research Grant
- 2021 – 2022      Research Assistant Scholarship, TUBITAK 3501
- 2020 – 2023      Full Tuition Waiver, 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 – 2018      Dean's High Honor, Ankara University (**I have been awarded High Honor in every semester**)
- 2015 – 2016      SABANCI Achievement Grant (Renounced)

## CURRENT RESEARCH:

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- 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 (SP):  
1) Consistency of moral beliefs  
2) Consistency of moral behaviors  
3) Religious group bias in anonymous interactions  
4) Intention-behavior gap in moral dilemmas  
5) Left-wing authoritarianism and moral behaviors  
6) Do meta-ethical beliefs predict moral behaviors?  
7) How do reflection and IQ relate to ideology and religious belief?  
8) The test of the dual-process model vs. the counter-normative model of religiosity  
9) The predictive powers of Morality-as-Cooperation vs. Moral Foundations Questionnaire-2 in moral behavior  
10) The determinants of moral courage: A comparison of third-party punishment vs. moral courage (The development of Moral Courage Game Protocol)

Note: All SPs are preregistered. Data collection has been completed for all SPs except SP2.

- 2021 – Present      **Funded by European Research Council, Advanced Grant (ERC-AdG)**  
Advisors: Assoc. Prof. Onurcan Yilmaz, Dr. Ozan Isler, Prof. Simon Gaechter  
Project: Contextual and cognitive underpinnings of political polarization in the domain of cooperation (in a registered report submission to *Nature Human Behaviour*)

Note: This is an extension of my master's thesis, funded by Prof. Gaechter's ERC-AdG Grant.

2021 – Present

**Department of Psychology, Kadir Has University**

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

Project 1: The effect of implicit religious primes on the prosociality of Christian believers

Project 2: A high-powered test of the Reflective Religious Doubt Hypothesis

Project 3: Effects of intuition and reflection on moral foundations in a non-WEIRD sample

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

Project 4: A high-powered test of intuitive vs. reflective cooperation accounts (**MA thesis**)

Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Onurcan Yilmaz

Project 5: Reflective foundations of the Morality as Cooperation Theory (**pending**)

Advisor: Prof. Adil Saribay

Project 6: Is there a racial bias in academic citations? A meta-science project (**pending**)

**RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:**

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Summer – Fall 2019

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

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

Project: Evolved Human Motives: A questionnaire validation study

- Ethics application
- Questionnaire design in MTurk
- Weekly meetings with 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

- Literature review / Writing
- Creating visual stimuli
- Designing 7 different experiments in SuperLab 4.0
- Recruiting participants in laboratory (N=500+)
- Cleaning and analyzing reaction time data in Excel and SPSS
- Preparing 3 posters
- Weekly lab meetings

Outcomes:

- Oral and poster presentations at national and international congresses (see below)

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

Project 2: Spontaneous mentalizing in mothers of children with autism

- Literature review / Writing
- Filming video stimuli
- Running eye-tracking experiments by using Tobii Eye Tracker
- Extracting different types of eye-tracking data from Tobii Studio
- Data cleaning and analyzing in Excel and SPSS
- Weekly lab meetings

Outcomes:

- Oral presentation at the British Psychological Society Annual Developmental Conference 2018 by Dr. Sarah White
- Oral presentation in the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Cognitive and Experimental Psychology Conference by Ensar Acem (Myself)
- Manuscript in review (see below)

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 lexical bundle on working memory

Project 2: Awareness of lexical stress in dyslexic children

- Creating verbal and audio stimuli
- Recruiting child participants
- Running an experiment by using SMI Eye Tracker, Eye View 4.7
- Data cleaning and analyzing in Excel

Spring 2017

**Experimental Psychology Laboratory, Ankara University (Student Research Assistant)**

Principal Investigators: Prof. Hakan Cetinkaya

Project 1: Implicit attitudes toward rape in males

Project 2: The effect of menstrual cycle on economic risk-taking behavior

- Literature review & creating an Implicit Association Test

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE:**

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Fall 2022

**Department of Psychology, Kadir Has University (Teaching Assistant)**

Class: Advanced Theoretical Perspectives in Social Psychology (grad-level)

Class: Introduction to Statistics (undergrad-level)

**OTHER EXPERIENCE:**

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2021 – Present

**Moral Intuitions Lab**

- Academic Proofreading – Team Leader
- Grant Applications: 3 rejections, 1 acceptance, 1 under review for ERC Starting Grant
- Peer Review Training

2020 – Present

**Social Media**

- Content Creation & Social Media Management:  
I manage multiple Twitter accounts with 40k+ organic followers.  
Average monthly tweet impression ≈ 5.5 Million

**PUBLICATIONS IN PROGRESS:**

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1. Yilmaz, O., **Acem, E.**, (invited submission). Moral intuition. In: Allison, S. T. (eds) *The Encyclopedia of Heroism Studies*. Springer, Cham.
2. **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.
3. **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?.
4. **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.
5. 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>

**ORAL PRESENTATIONS:**

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1. **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.
2. **Acem E.** (2018). *Theory of Mind and implicit mentalizing in autism*. 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Cognitive-Experimental Psychology Conference, Ankara University, Turkey.
3. **Acem E.** (2018). *Sociobiology of incest taboo*. 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Sociology Conference, Ankara University, Turkey.

## POSTER PRESENTATIONS:

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

## INVITED TALKS:

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- 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:

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- 2022 Digital Marketing, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)  
2021 Introduction to R, DataCamp  
2021 Introduction to Statistics in Spreadsheets, DataCamp  
2020 The Data Scientist's Toolbox, Johns Hopkins University  
2019 Improving Your Statistical Inferences, Eindhoven University of Technology  
2019 Introduction to Python, Ankara University Neuroscience Society  
2015 Computer Usage, Ministry of Education, Turkey

## RELATED COURSES:

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- Open Science and Replication Crisis
- Evolutionary Psychology
- Political Psychology
- Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination
- Adv. Theoretical Perspectives in Social Psych.
- Social Psychology I & II & III & IV
- Experimental Psychology
- Understanding Medical Research (*Yale Uni.*)
- Computer Programs for Psychological Research
- Adv. Research Methods and Data Analysis I & II
- Research Methods I & II
- Applied Statistical Methods
- Statistics & Advanced Statistics
- Ethnographic and Qualitative Analysis of Culture
- History of Scientific Thought
- Birth and Development of Scientific Method

## AFFILIATIONS:

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- The Center for the Science of Moral Understanding, University of North Carolina ([Affiliate](#))
- The Moral Intuitions Lab at Kadir Has University ([Research Assistant](#))
- Kadir Has University Chess Society (Member)
- Ankara University Neuroscience Society (Member)
- Ankara University Psychology Students Society (Member)

## SKILLS:

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- **Eye tracking:** Tobii Eye Tracker, Tobii Studio, SMI Eye Tracker, BeGaze.
- **Experimental design:** SuperLab.
- **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:** Pixlr X, Adobe Photoshop (intermediate).
- **Others computer skills:** MS Office, MS Teams, Google Suite, Zoom, Slack, Teamviewer, etc.
- **Languages:** Turkish, English.

## NON-PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS:

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- Blogging, chess, cinema, poetry, social media, writing.
- Philosophy of science, philosophy of state and society, political economy, sociology of law.

## PERSONAL VALUES:

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

## WEBLINKS:

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- Open Science Framework (OSF): <https://osf.io/g46ym/>
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ensaracem/>
- Academic Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ensaracem/>
- Personal blog 1 (Turkish; on life and being human): <https://oylesermestemki.blogspot.com/>
- Personal blog 2 (Turkish; on poetry): <http://gitmedemeyecegim.blogspot.com/>
- Personal blog 3 (Turkish; on science): <http://cok-dusunme-surmenaj-olursun.blogspot.com/>

## REFERENCES:

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### Prof. Robert Aunger

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### Dr. Sarah White

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