

Isaias Ghezae

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EDUCATION

Harvard University 2024 – Present
Ph.D., Social Psychology
 Advisor: Mina Cikara

University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) 2018 – 2022
B.S., Psychological & Brain Sciences
Highest Honors (GPA: 3.96/4.00)
 Thesis: *A sufficiency test of the alliance hypothesis of race*

HONORS, FELLOWSHIPS, & AWARDS

National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (\$111,000)	2024 – 2029
Presidential Scholar, Harvard Griffin Graduate School of Arts and Sciences	2024 – 2029
Morgan Award for Research Promise, UCSB Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences	2022
Clyde Woods Award, UCSB McNair Scholars Program	2022
Undergraduate Registration Award, SPSP	2022
SPUR Project Conference Presentation Award (\$500), SPSP	2021
Brehm Undergraduate Psychology Scholarship (\$5,000), American Psychological Foundation	2021
Mamie Phipps Clark Grant (\$1,500), Psi Chi, The International Honor Society in Psychology	2021
Barry M. Goldwater Scholar (\$7,500), The Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation	2021
BrainWAVE Fellow (\$6,620 Summer Stipend), Chen Institute for Neuroscience at Caltech	2021
Social-Personality Undergraduate Research (SPUR) Fellow (\$1,500 Stipend), SPSP	2021
Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Grant (\$750), UCSB	2020
Registration Award, Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minoritized Scientists	2020
Neuroscience Essay Contest Winner (\$6,000), Caltech Professor Dr. Doris Tsao	2020
Ronald E. McNair Scholar (\$3,000 Stipend), UCSB McNair Scholars Program	2020 – 2022

PUBLICATIONS


Landry, A. P., **Ghezae, I.**, Abou-Ismaïl, R., Spooner, S., August, R. J., Mair, C., Ragnhildstveit, A., Van den Noortgate, W., Gelfand, M. J., Seli, P. (2025). The uniquely powerful impact of explicit, blatant dehumanization on support for intergroup violence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 📄

Ghezae, I., Yang, F., & Yu, H. (2025). On the perception of moral standing to blame. *Open Mind*. 📄


Ghezae, I.*, Jordan, J. J.*, Gainsburg, I. B., Mosleh, M., Pennycook, G., Willer, R., & Rand, D. G. (2024). Partisans neither expect nor receive reputational rewards for sharing falsehoods over truth online. *PNAS Nexus*. 📄


Voelkel, J. G.*, Stagnaro, M. N.*, Chu, J.*, Pink, S. L., Mernyk, J. S., Redekopp, C., **Ghezae, I.**, Cashman, M., Strengthening Democracy Challenge Finalists, Druckman, J., Rand, D. G., & Willer, R. (2024). Megastudy testing 25 treatments to reduce anti-democratic attitudes and partisan animosity. *Science*. 📄

WORKING PAPERS

Ghezae, I., Lelkes, Y., & Cikara, M. (submitted). Who goes with whom: The multidimensional cognitive map of U.S. political coalitions. 

Ghezae, I., Conroy-Beam, D., & Pietraszewski, D. Modeling the social and cognitive processes necessary to produce perceptions of race.

Cetron, J. S.*, **Ghezae, I.***, Haque, O., Mair, P., & Cikara, M. Personal relevance of attitude importance predicts costly intergroup behavior. 

Ashokkumar, A.*, Hewitt, L.*, **Ghezae, I.**, & Willer, R. (invited revision). Predicting results of social science experiments using large language models. 

**Denotes equal contribution*

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Ghezae, I., Lelkes, Y., & Cikara, M. (2026, February). Mapping the political landscape: The multidimensional structure of perceived coalitions. Data blitz presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology Political Psychology Preconference.

Ghezae, I., & Cikara, M. (2026, February). The cognitive map of politics: Measuring how voters organize and perceive political coalitions. Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology.

Ghezae, I., & Cikara, M. (2025, December). The cognitive map of politics: Measuring how voters organize and perceive political coalitions. Poster presented at the 2025 Workshop on Directions of Polarization, Social Norms, and Trust in Societies at MIT.

Ghezae, I., & Cikara, M. (2025, August). The cognitive map of politics: Measuring how voters organize and perceive political coalitions. Poster presented at the 18th Annual Political Networks and Computational Social Science Conference.

Ghezae, I., & Cikara, M. (2025, July). The cognitive map of politics: Measuring how voters organize and perceive political coalitions. Talk presented at the Summer Institute in Computational Social Science at the University of Pennsylvania.

Ghezae, I., Gallo, M., Tashjian, S. M., & Camerer, C. F. (2024, February). The role of perceptual hypodescent in group-based social learning. Poster presented at the Undergraduate Poster Session of the 25th Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology.

Ghezae, I., & Yu, H. (2022, February). Moral standing to blame: An empirical perspective. Poster presented at the Undergraduate Poster Session of the 23rd Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology.

Ghezae, I., & Howansky, K. (2021, December). Probing the relationship between collective existential threat and motivated outgroup perception. Oral presentation at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology SPUR Project Conference.*

***Winner of the SPUR Project Conference Presentation Award**

Ghezae, I., Tashjian, S. M., & Camerer, C. F. (2021, August). Social learning and the dynamic updating of group value. Oral presentation at the Caltech Student-Faculty Programs Summer Seminar Day.

Conroy-Beam, D., **Ghezae, I.***, & Pietraszewski, D. (2021, June). A sufficiency test of the alliance hypothesis of race. Talk presented at the annual meeting of the Human Behavior and Evolution Society. **non-presenting co-authored talk*

Conroy-Beam, D., **Ghezae, I.***, & Pietraszewski, D. (2021, May). A sufficiency test of the alliance hypothesis of race. Talk presented at the UCSB Center for Evolutionary Psychology. **non-presenting co-authored talk*

Ghezae, I., & Yu, H. (2021, May). Moral standing to blame and social identity. Poster presented at the UCSB Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Colloquium.

Ghezae, I., & Yu, H. (2020, November). Moral standing to blame: An exploratory empirical study. Poster presented at the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minoritized Scientists.

Ghezae, I., & Yu, H. (2020, August). Moral standing to blame: An exploratory empirical study. Oral presentation at the UCSB McNair Scholars Program Summer Research Symposium.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Summer Institute in Computational Social Science (SICSS) Jun 2025 – Jul 2025
University of Pennsylvania

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Coordinator Jul 2022 – Jul 2024
Politics and Social Change Lab
Stanford University

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Robb Willer

- Collaborated with and assisted faculty, post-doctoral scholars, and graduate students on various research projects. Specifically, I analyzed data, developed reproducible code, prepared IRBs, programmed surveys, communicated with online panel providers, and fielded studies on various online labor markets (Lucid, MTurk, Bovitz, etc.)
- Handled lab finances: online participant payments for studies, conference and travel fees, equipment purchases, food expenses, and reimbursements
- Managed undergraduate RAs and co-led weekly RA meetings
- Organized weekly lunches and lab workshops involving guest speakers, as well as special lab events (special lab visits, socials, etc.)
- Coordinated the interview process for multiple job applicants (reviewed materials, communicated with applicants, created interview schedules, and organized job talks)
- Developed and deployed an interactive online web application that summarizes the results of a large megastudy that was run by the lab

Undergraduate Researcher Oct 2021 – Mar 2022
Spatial Thinking Lab
University of California, Santa Barbara

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Mary Hegarty

- Developed multiple data wrangling and analysis scripts for a 3D spatial reasoning project

BrainWAVE Fellow Jun 2021 – Sep 2021
Camerer Group Behavioral and Neuroeconomics Lab
California Institute of Technology

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Colin Camerer

- Proposed a a three-phase experimental study with six conditions in order to investigate how implicit racial categorization influences social learning and trust
- Prepared IRB materials and pre-registration documents in OSF, and presented research to a multidisciplinary audience

- Used PsychoPy to create a multi-trial racial categorization task to measure participants' level of perceptual racial bias (i.e., hypodescent). I also developed a repeated economic trust game and a partner choice game in which participants could pick partners to play with in future trust games
- Created data wrangling scripts in R for complex trial-by-trial behavioral data and performed data analysis (psychophysical modeling, regression, etc.)

SPUR Scholar

Jan 2021 – Dec 2021

Mind and Person Perception Lab

St. Mary's College of Maryland

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Kristina Howansky

- Applied to and awarded an external Psi Chi grant to fund a project investigating how perceptions of ingroup decline lead to motivated visual perception
- Prepared IRB materials and used R to automate facial stimuli generation for a reverse-correlation behavioral task
- Used PsychoPy to create behavioral tasks, Pavlovia to collect data, and R to create data wrangling and analysis scripts

Research Affiliate

Nov 2020 – Jan 2024

Center for the Science of Moral Understanding

University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill

Director: Dr. Kurt Gray

- Collaborated with an international team of researchers to understand the negative political consequences of moral convictions
- Created data wrangling scripts to automate the cleaning of multiple large experimental data sets
- Leveraged an approximate string-matching function in R to score large amounts of text data
- Attended the inaugural CSMU conference in Durham, NC which included workshops focused on recent work in the science of moral understanding from leading academics and practitioners

Undergraduate Researcher

Mar 2020 – Jun 2022

Yu Emotion Science Lab

University of California, Santa Barbara

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Hongbo Yu

- Spent a summer doing full-time research with the PI as a McNair Summer Scholar and was awarded a small research grant to help fund an independent research project
- Led a project focused on understanding the cognitive antecedents that determine whether a blamer is perceived to have moral standing to blame
- Programmed a series of Qualtrics surveys and created pre-registration documents
- Analyzed data in R (linear regression, ANOVA, etc.) and performed data visualization for multiple studies

Undergraduate Researcher

Mar 2019 – Jun 2022

Computational Mate Choice Lab

University of California, Santa Barbara

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Daniel Conroy-Beam

- Participated in multiple hands-on workshops on how to create agent-based models in R
- Assisted the PI in the development of agent-based models of human mate choice

Honors Thesis

- Conducted an in-depth literature review on topics related to coalitional psychology, racial categorization, and evolutionary models of cooperation
- Worked with the PI to develop multiple Bayesian agent-based models with the overall goal to

understand how stable coalitions stratified by phenotype can emerge from minimal conditions

OPEN-SOURCE SOFTWARE

Ghezae, I. (2023). Unique Turker 2: Python application for researchers to manage worker access to HITs on Amazon Mechanical Turk. [📁](#) [🔗](#)

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

Ghezae, I. (2020, October 1). The Social Media Outrage Machine: How Our Digital Worlds Distort Political Discourse and Why This Matters. Santa Barbara Independent. [🔗](#)

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Experimental	Qualtrics, PsychoPy, Pavlovia, GitLab, Amazon MTurk, Lucid Marketplace, CloudResearch, Prolific Academic, Forthright Access, Open Science Framework
Languages & Tools	R, Python, \LaTeX , HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Bootstrap, Git, SQLAlchemy, Quarto, Jupyter, reveal.js, PythonAnywhere, Google Apps Script, Observable, Figma, Heroku, Google Cloud
Techniques & Analyses	Agent-Based Modeling, Noise-Based Reverse Correlation, Network Analysis, Multilevel Models, Tree-Based Methods, Supervised Machine Learning (k-NN; SVM), Unsupervised Machine Learning (k-means; HCA), Cross-Validation, Permutation Tests, Dimensionality Reduction (PCA; MDS), NLP (nltk; gensim; transformers)
Full Stack Web/API Dev	Flask, Shiny, FastAPI, Plumber, Streamlit, Dash, Replit, Svelte