

LÉO FITOUCHI

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[Professional website](#)
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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

2023 Research Fellow, Institute for Advanced Study in Toulouse, Toulouse School of Economics

EDUCATION

2023 Ph.D. in Cognitive Science, École Normale Supérieure, Paris
Dissertation: The cognitive anthropology of moralistic culture.

2019 M.Sc. in Cognitive Science, with high honors (ranking: 2nd/49). ENS Paris

2017 B.A. in Philosophy of science, with high honors. Panthéon-Sorbonne University

2016–2020 Scholarship at École Normale Supérieure, Paris. Major in Cognitive Science.

2016 Admitted at École Normale Supérieure through the competitive exam (Ulm B/L)

2013–2016 Intensive preparatory class in social sciences (“Prépa B/L”), Lycée du Parc, Lyon

PUBLICATIONS

* corresponding author

† senior author (mentoring student)

JOURNAL ARTICLES (PEER-REVIEWED)

6. **Fitouchi, L.***, Singh, M., André, J.-B., & Baumard, N. (2025). Prosocial religions as folk-technologies of mutual policing. *Psychological Review*. [PDF](#)
5. Lie-Panis, J.*, **Fitouchi, L.***, Baumard, N., & André, J.-B. (2024). The social leverage effect: Institutions transform weak reputation effects into strong incentives for cooperation. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 121 (51), e2408802121. [Link](#) [PDF](#)
4. **Fitouchi, L.***, André, J. B., & Baumard, N. (2023). Moral disciplining: The cognitive and evolutionary foundations of puritanical morality (target article). *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 46, e293. [Link](#) [PDF](#)
3. **Fitouchi, L.**, & Singh, M. (2023). Punitive justice serves to restore reciprocal cooperation in three small-scale societies. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 44(5), 502-514. [Link](#) [PDF](#) [OSF](#). Covered on podcast [Very Bad Wizards](#).
2. **Fitouchi, L.***, & Singh, M.* (2022). Supernatural punishment beliefs as cognitively compelling tools of social control. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 44, 252-257. [Link](#) [PDF](#)

1. De Courson, B., **Fitouchi, L.**, Bouchaud, J. P., & Benzaquen, M. (2021). Cultural diversity and wisdom of crowds are mutually beneficial and evolutionarily stable. *Scientific Reports*, 11(1), 1-15. [Link](#) [PDF](#) [GitHub](#)

JOURNAL ARTICLES IN REVISION AND WORKING PAPERS

7. **Fitouchi, L.*** & Nettle, D. Harmless bodily pleasures are moralized because they are perceived as reducing self-control and cooperativeness (in revision, *Cognition*). [PREPRINT](#) [OSF](#)
6. André, J.-B., **Fitouchi, L.**, Debove, S., & Baumard, N. An evolutionary contractualist theory of morality (in revision, *Psychological Review*) [PREPRINT](#)
5. Singh, M.* & **Fitouchi, L.***. Retributive sentiments track both deterrent and compensatory concerns in a small-scale society (under review, *Psychological Science*). [PREPRINT](#)
4. **Fitouchi, L.***, Fiorio, G., Baumard, N., & André, J.-B. (in prep). *Just desert: Contractualist computations explain moralistic punishment*.
3. Fiorio, G., Baumard, N., André, J.-B., & **Fitouchi, L.*** (in prep). *Cross-cultural regularities in the architecture of compensatory justice*.
2. Lie-Panis, J.*, **Fitouchi, L.***, Baumard, N., André, J.-B. (in prep). *Moral norms make cooperation less efficient to improve cheater-detection*.
1. Dubourg, E., Thouzeau, V., Beuchot, T., Bonard, C., Boyer, P., ..., **Fitouchi, L.**, Singh, M Verpooten, J., Zhong, Y., Baumard, N. *Cognitive foundations of fictional stories*. [PREPRINT](#)

LETTERS, COMMENTARIES, AND RESPONSES

5. **Fitouchi, L.***, André J.-B., Baumard, N. (2023). The puritanical moral contract: Purity, cooperation, and the architecture of the moral mind ([Response to commentaries](#) on Fitouchi et al). *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. [Link](#) [PDF](#)
4. André, J.-B.*, **Fitouchi, L.***, Baumard, N. (2023). Reciprocal contracts—not competitive acquisition—explain the moral psychology of ownership (Commentary on Boyer). *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. [Link](#) [PDF](#)
3. Dubourg, E., **Fitouchi, L.**, Baumard, N. (2022). When instrumental inference hides behind seemingly arbitrary conventions (Commentary on Jiagello, Heyes, & Whitehouse). *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. [Link](#) [PDF](#)
2. **Fitouchi L.***, André J.-B., Baumard, N. (2022). From supernatural punishment to big gods to puritanical religions: Clarifying explanatory targets in the rise of moralizing religions (Commentary on Turchin, Whitehouse, et al.). *Religion, Brain and Behavior*. [Link](#) [PDF](#)
1. **Fitouchi L.***, André J.-B., Baumard, N. (2021). The intertwined cultural evolution of ascetic spiritualities and puritanical religions as technologies of self-discipline (Commentary on Glucklich). *Religion, Brain and Behavior*. [Link](#) [PDF](#)

BOOK CHAPTERS

2. Baumard, N., André, J.B., Nettle, D., **Fitouchi, L.**, Scott-Philipps, T. (in press). The gene's eye view of culture. *APA Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology*. [PREPRINT](#)
1. **Fitouchi L.***, André J.-B., Baumard, N. (2024). Are there really so many moral emotions? Carving morality at its functional joints. In Al-Shawaf, L. & Shackelford, T.K. (Eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Evolution and the Emotions*. Oxford University Press. [Link](#) [PDF](#)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

INVITED TALKS

5. MIT, VU Amsterdam, & University of Vienna, *Cooperation Colloquia* (October 2024). "Rethinking the moral psychology of punishment" [YouTube](#)
4. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, *Moral Cultures Workshop* (August 2024). "Just desert: Explaining retributivism."
3. University of California Davis, Department of Anthropology (May 2024), "Punitive justice in small-scale societies."
2. University of California Santa Barbara, *Emotions in History Workshop* (August 2023), "Moral emotions and the historical psychology of puritanism."
1. University of California Santa Barbara, *Center for Evolutionary Psychology* (May 2023), "Cognitive foundations of puritanical religions."

CONFERENCE TALKS

10. Fitouchi, L. (May 2024). "Prosocial religions as folk-technologies of mutual policing." Talk at *Human Behavior and Evolution Society* (HBES). Aarhus University, Denmark. **Finalist for New Investigator Award.**
9. Fitouchi, L. (April 2023). "Punitive justice serves to restore reciprocal cooperation in three small-scale societies." Talk at *European Human Behavior and Evolution Association* (EHBEA), University College London
8. Fitouchi, L. (December 2022). "Moralizing religions as technologies of mutual policing." Talk at *Evolution, Cognition, and Culture* (workshop), Saint-Jacut Abbey.
7. Fitouchi, L. (November 2022). "Punitive justice serves to restore reciprocal cooperation in three small-scale societies." Talk at *French society for the Evolutionary Study of Humans* (FRESH), Institute for Advanced Studies in Toulouse.
6. Fitouchi, L. (June 2022). "Institutionalized punishment serves to restore reciprocal cooperation in three small-scale societies." Talk at *Human Behavior and Evolution Society* (HBES), online
5. Fitouchi, L. (November 2021). "Moralizing religions as cognitively compelling tools of social control". Short talk at *French society for the Evolutionary Study of Humans* (FRESH), Montpellier.
4. Fitouchi, L. (September 2021). "The foundations of puritanical morality and moralizing religions." Short talk at *Leda Cosmides and John Tooby: Honoring 40 years of innovation*, Royaumont Abbey, France

3. Fitouchi, L. (June 2021). "Moral disciplining: the cognitive and evolutionary foundations of puritanical morality." Talk at *Human Behavior and Evolution Society* (HBES). online
2. Fitouchi, L. (November 2020). "Cognitive and evolutionary foundations of puritanical morality." Short talk at *FRESH (French Society for Evolutionary Human Sciences)*, online.
1. Fitouchi L., & Altay, S. (December 2018). "A cognitive and evolutionary look at cultural diffusion" Talk at *Comparative mythology, population genetics, linguistic phylogenetics, and cognitive patterns: Studies in the new science of cultural diffusion*, École Normale Supérieure, Paris.

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

2. Fitouchi, L. (April 2022). "Supernatural punishment beliefs as cognitively compelling tools of social control." Poster at *European Human Behavior and Evolution Association* (EHBEA), Max Planck Institute for evolutionary anthropology, Leipzig
1. Fitouchi L. (July 2021). "Reverse-engineering puritanical morality" Poster at *Cognitive Science Society: Engineering and reverse engineering morality*, online.

TEACHING & SUPERVISION

INVITED LECTURER

Summer 2024	<i>Cooperation at the micro- and macro-scales</i> Summer School, Central European University Budapest
Fall 2021-Spring 2022- Fall 2022-Fall 2023	<i>Human cooperation: Evolution, psychology, institutions</i> PSL University, 30 hours per semester (x4)
Spring 2023	<i>Cognitive anthropology</i> , PSL University (with Olivier Morin)
Fall 2022	<i>Social cognition</i> , PSL University

TEACHING ASSISTANT

Spring 2021-Spring 2022	<i>Cultural Evolution</i> , ENS Paris (Instructor: Olivier Morin) 20 hours per semester (x2)
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GUEST LECTURES

- "Evolution of human behavior" (Spring 2024). Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle Paris
- "The evolution of moral cognition" (Spring 2024). Sciences Po Paris
- "Moral psychology" (Spring 2023). ENS Paris
- "Evolution and psychology of reputation-management" (Spring 2023). ENS Paris
- "The rise of tolerance and the fall of moral policing" (Spring 2022). ENS Paris
- "Evolution and psychology of reputation-management" (Spring 2022). ENS Paris
- "Moral psychology" (Spring 2022). ENS Paris
- "The cultural evolution of norms and institutions" (Spring 2021). ENS Paris
- "Cultural evolution: A general introduction" (Spring 2021). ENS Paris
- "Evolution and psychology of reputation-management" (Spring 2021). ENS Paris
- "Moral psychology" (Spring 2021). ENS Paris

STUDENT SUPERVISION

PhD students:

Gregory Fiorio (2024-2027). *The moral regulation of violence*.

Grégoire Darcy (2024-2027). *Social trust and cultural tightness*.

Master students:

Grégory Fiorio (Fall 2023, Spring 2024). *The moral regulation of punishment*.

Grégoire Darcy (Spring 2023, Fall 2023, Spring 2024). *Explaining variations in cultural tightness*.

Julie Navelier (Fall 2022, Spring 2023). *The moral psychology of special obligations*.

OTHER TEACHING

Spring 2017, Fall 2018 *The dynamics of capitalism* (Course in economic and social history for high-school students), Tal-ENS program, ENS Paris

POPULAR AUDIENCE

“D’où vient notre sens de la justice ?” (2023). *France Inter* (Radio France). [Link](#)

“What’s punishment like in small-scale societies?” (2023). *Human Behavior and Evolution Society*. [Link](#)

“Moral emotions, punishment, and puritanical morality” (2023). *The Dissenter* (Ricardo Lopez), podcast. [YouTube](#) [Spotify](#)

“La morale puritaine : pourquoi condamner des plaisirs apparemment inoffensifs ?” (2022). *DEC Actualités*. [Link](#) (English translation: [Link](#))

“Psychological consequences of believing in heaven and hell” (2022). *Psychology today*. [Link](#)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

BOOK REVIEWING

Cambridge University Press (Book: Purzycki, B. 2025. *Morality and the Gods*)

MANUSCRIPT REVIEWING (verified on [Web of Science profile](#))

PNAS; Cognition; Journal of Personality and Social Psychology; Evolutionary Anthropology; Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B; Evolution and Human Behavior; Evolutionary Human Sciences; Review of Philosophy and Psychology; Journal of the Economic Science Association; Applied Economics; Journal of Personality

ORGANIZED CONFERENCES & SEMINARS

Fall 2024 – Spring 2025 IAST General Seminar series

November 2022 *Evolution, cognition, and culture*. Workshop at Saint-Jacut Abbey.

Spring 2019 *Naturalizing the social sciences: How evolutionary biology and cognitive science are reshaping the study of culture* (Student seminar, ENS Paris)

UNIVERSITY/DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

2022. Admission interviews for PSL University, B.S: “Sciences for a Sustainable World”
2021–2022 Elected member of the Executive Board of the École Normale Supérieure, Paris