

# LUIS SEBASTIAN CONTRERAS-HUERTA

*Assistant Professor / Research Director*

*School of Psychology, Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez*

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## EDUCATION

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- 2021 **PhD in Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford, United Kingdom.**  
Supervisors: Dr. Matthew Apps, Dr. Molly Crockett and Dr. Geoffrey Bird.
- 2012 **MSc in Neuroscience (High Achievement Academic Award), University of Queensland, Australia.** Supervisor: Dr. Ross Cunnington
- 2008 **BSc in Psychology (Maximum Distinction), Universidad de Valparaíso, Chile.**  
Supervisor: Dr. Adrián Palacios.
- Psychologist (professional qualification). Universidad de Valparaíso, Chile.**

## ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

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***School of Psychology, Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez, Chile.***

- 2026 - **Research Director**  
2023 - **Assistant Professor**

Principal Investigator, Emotions and Social Decisions Lab (ESD Lab)

Researcher, Centre for Social and Cognitive Neuroscience (CSCN)

Academic member, PhD and MSc. in Social and Cognitive Neuroscience programs

Academic member, Master in Psychology program

Lecturer in undergraduate and postgraduate courses

Member, Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology

Public engagement and science communication activities

- 2023 – 2025 Academic Coordinator, B.A. in Psychology curriculum

***Center of Social Conflict and Cohesion Studies (COES), Chile.***

- 2024 - 2025 **Adjunct Researcher.** Conducts transdisciplinary research on group and individual interactions, bridging basic and applied science to address social conflict and promote cohesion

***Centre for Human Brain Health, School of Psychology, University of Birmingham, UK***

- 2021 - 2023 **Postdoctoral Research Fellow.** Research on social decisions in complex environments using fMRI and computational modelling

**School of Psychology, Universidad Diego Portales, Chile**

2015 – 2016 **Academic Director of the MSc programme in Social Neuroscience.**

2013 – 2016 **Associate lecturer and researcher.** Lectures at undergraduate and postgraduate courses, associate researcher at the Laboratory of Cognitive and Social Neuroscience, and at the Centre for the Study of Argumentation and Reasoning.

**School of Psychology, Universidad de Santiago de Chile.**

2013 – 2014 **Research assistant.** Research on positive psychology using psychophysiological measures

**The Interdisciplinary Centre for Neuroscience of Valparaíso, Universidad de Valparaíso.**

2009 – 2010 **Research assistant.** Research on memory, learning and synaptic plasticity using rodent models

**TEACHING**

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**Main Lecturer (current)**

**Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez**

2026 - *Current Topics in Psychology* (MSc. in Psychology)

2023 - *Motivation and Emotion* (B.A. in Psychology)

*Social Context and Behaviour* (B.A. in Psychology)

**Main Lecturer (previous)**

**Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez**

2024 - 2025 *Human Behaviour: Emotion and Cognition* (B.A. in Communication Science)

2023 *Cognition, Emotion and Decision-Making* (B.A. in Psychology)

**Universidad Diego Portales**

2013 – 2016 *Neuroscience and Psychology* (B.A. in Psychology)

*Research in Psychology* (B.A. in Psychology)

*Statistics* (B.A. in Psychology)

*Neural and Cognitive Bases of Decision-Making* (B.A. in Psychology)

2015 - 2016 *Social Neuroscience* (seminar, MSc. in Social Neuroscience)

**Universidad Valparaíso**

2015 *Neuropsychology* (B.A. in Psychology)

**Demonstrator/Tutorials**

**University of Oxford**

2018 – 2019 *Core Practical in Social Psychology.* (B.A. Experimental Psychology)

**Universidad de Valparaíso**

2006 – 2008 *Philosophical and epistemological foundations of Psychology* (B.A. in Psychology)

*Cognitive Processes* (B.A. in Psychology)

## SUPERVISION

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### Thesis Main Supervision

#### Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez

- 2026 - Diego Garrido. PhD in Cognitive and Social Neuroscience  
2026 - Macarena Churruca. PhD in Cognitive and Social Neuroscience
- 2026 - Camila Leiva. MSc. in Social and Cognitive Neuroscience  
2025 - Pía Valdivia. MSc. in Social and Cognitive Neuroscience  
2025 - José Bórquez. MSc. in Social and Cognitive Neuroscience  
2025 - Fiorella Macchiavello. MSc. in Clinical Psychology.  
2025 - Matías Carmarch. MSc. in Social Psychology

### Thesis Co-Supervision

#### Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez

- 2025 - Emilio Recart. PhD in Cognitive and Social Neuroscience

#### University of Birmingham

- 2021–2022 Max Laverty. MSc. in Brain Imaging and Cognitive Neuroscience.

#### University of Oxford

- 2018 – 2020 Svenja Küchenhoff & Arno Gekiere. MSc. *Erasmus* students.

### Thesis Committee

#### Universidad Adolfo Ibanez

- 2025 Antonia Zepeda. PhD in Cognitive and Social Neuroscience  
2024 Paola Solano. PhD in Cognitive and Social Neuroscience.

#### Universidad Diego Portales

- 2019 Elizabeth Ibarra. MSc. in Social Neuroscience.

## PUBLICATIONS (Google Scholar, <https://bit.ly/2ZV2AwO>; \* denotes equal contribution)

1. Rojas-Thomas, F., Macchiavello, F., Soto, V., Franco-OByrne, D., Bórquez, J., Ruiz, C., Ramírez-Barrantes, R., Huepe, D., & **Contreras-Huerta, L. S.** (2026). Mobile EEG as a Valid Alternative to High-Resolution Laboratory EEG Measures. *NeuroImage*, 121950.
2. Baquedano, C., Olguí, A., **Contreras-Huerta, L. S.**, Rosas, F. E., & Estarellas, M. (2026). Your Brain on Nature: A Scoping Review of the Neuroscience of Nature Exposure. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 106565.
3. Cutler, J.\*, **Contreras-Huerta, L. S.**\*, Todorova, B., Nitschke, J. P., Michalaki, K., Koppel, L., ... Lockwood, P. (2025). Psychological interventions increase motivation to exert effort to mitigate climate change. *Communications Psychology*, 3(1), 148.
4. Zoh, Y., Yu, H., **Contreras-Huerta, L.S.**, Prosser, A.M.B., Apps, M.A.J., Sinnott-Armstrong, W., Chang, S.W.C., & Crockett, M.J. (2025). Instrumental harm and impartial beneficence distinctively frame cognitive representations of moral decision problems. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 154(11), 3217.

5. **Contreras-Huerta, L. S.**, Yu, H., Prosser, A. M., Lockwood, P. L., Crockett, M. J., & Apps, M. A. (2025). Hypocritical blame is associated with reduced prosocial motivation. *Scientific Reports*, 15(1), 32811.
6. **Contreras-Huerta, L. S.**, Pisauro, M. A., Küchenhoff, S., Gekiere, A., Le Heron, C., Lockwood, P. L., & Apps, M. A. (2024). A reward self-bias leads to more optimal foraging for ourselves than others. *Scientific Reports*, 14(1), 26845.
7. Doell, K., Todorova, B., Vlasceanu, M., Bak-Coleman, ..., **Contreras-Huerta, L.S.**, ..., J., Van Bavel, J. J., & Pronizius, E. (2024). The International Climate Psychology Collaboration: Climate change-related data collected from 63 countries. *Scientific data*, 11(1), 1066.
8. Vlasceanu, M., Doell, K., Bak-Coleman, J., ..., **Contreras-Huerta L.S.**, ... & Van Bavel, J. J. (2024). Addressing Climate Change with Behavioral Science: A Global Intervention Tournament in 63 Countries. *Science Advances*, 10(6), eadj5778.
9. **Contreras-Huerta, L. S.** (2023). A cost-benefit framework for prosocial motivation–advantages and challenges. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 14, 1170150.
10. **Contreras-Huerta, L. S.**, Coll, M.P., Bird, G., Yu, H., Prosser, A., Lockwood, P.L., Murphy, J., Crockett, M.J. \* and Apps, M.A.\* (2023). Neural representations of vicarious rewards are linked to interoception and prosocial behaviour. *NeuroImage*, 269, 119881.
11. Yu, H., **Contreras-Huerta, L. S.**, Prosser, A., Apps, M. A., Hofmann, W., Sinnott-Armstrong, W., and Crockett, M. J. (2022). Neural and cognitive signatures of guilt predict hypocritical blame. *Psychological Science*, 33(11), 1909-1927
12. **Contreras-Huerta, L. S.**, Lockwood, P. L., Bird, G., Apps, M. A. \*, & Crockett, M. J. \* (2022). Prosocial behavior is associated with transdiagnostic markers of affective sensitivity in multiple domains. *Emotion*.
13. **Contreras-Huerta, L. S.**, Pisauro, M. A., & Apps, M. A. (2020). Effort shapes social cognition and behaviour: A neuro-cognitive framework. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 118, 426-439.
14. Cao, Y., **Contreras-Huerta, L. S.**, McFadyen, J., & Cunnington, R. (2015). Racial bias in neural response to others' pain is reduced with other-race contact. *Cortex*, 70, 68-78.
15. **Contreras-Huerta, L. S.**, Hielscher, E., Sherwell, C. S., Rens, N., & Cunnington, R. (2014). Intergroup relationships do not reduce racial bias in empathic neural responses to pain. *Neuropsychologia*, 64, 263-270.
16. Fuentes, M. A., Lavín, C., **Contreras-Huerta, L. S.**, Miguel, H., & Rosales Jubal, E. (2014). Stochastic model predicts evolving preferences in the Iowa gambling task. *Frontiers in computational neuroscience*, 8, 167.
17. **Contreras-Huerta, L. S.**, Baker, K. S., Reynolds, K. J., Batalha, L., & Cunnington, R. (2013). Racial bias in neural empathic responses to pain. *PloS one*, 8(12), e84001.
18. Lavin, C., San Martín, R., Bravo, D., **Contreras, L.**, & Isla, P. (2011). [Brain potentials related to

feedback on the study of learning and economic decision making]. *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología*, 43(3), 455-471. [In Spanish].

19. Muñoz, P. C., Aspé, M. A., **Contreras, L. S.**, & Palacios, A. G. (2010). Correlations of recognition memory performance with expression and methylation of brain-derived neurotrophic factor in rats. *Biological Research*, 43(2), 251-258.

#### PREPRINTS

20. **Contreras-Huerta, L. S.**, Yu, H., Prosser, A. M., Lockwood, P. L., Rojas-Thomas, F., Crockett, M. J., & Apps, M. A. (2025). Neural signatures of harm aversion predict later willingness to exert effort for others rewards. *bioRxiv*, 2025-10.
21. Ruggeri, K., Valenzuela-Catarí, G., Polemiti, E., Abderahaman, G., Adawi, T. R., Agopian, T., **Contreras-Huerta L.S.**, ..., Macchiavello, F., ..., Rojas-Thomas F., ... & Mullabaeva, N. (2025). Global well-being in 2025: A multidimensional analysis of mental, financial, and social health in 92 countries. *PsyArXiv*.

#### GRANTS AND AWARDS

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- 2026 **Research Support Program, Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez ~ USD 5,000.** “Digital psychoeducational intervention for academic stress in university teaching and gender implications”. (Principal Investigator)
- 2025 – 2027 **National Fund for Scientific and Technological Development (FONDECYT 11250611).** ~ USD 100,000. National Agency for Research and Development (ANID). Government of Chile. Project “Neurocognitive Mechanisms of Prosocial Behaviour in Socioeconomically Vulnerable Populations”. (Principal Investigator)
- 2024 – 2026 **National Fund for Scientific and Technological Development (FONDECYT 1241087).** ~ USD 300,000. National Agency for Research and Development (ANID). Government of Chile. Project “Enactive empathy: a multimodal study of the relevance of the body, experience, and temporality in emotional connection with others.” (Co-Investigator).
- 2024 – 2025 **Varela Grant. USD 25,000.** Mind & Life Institute. Project: “Bridging Minds and Nature: Integrating Contemplative Wisdoms for Enhancing Nature-Connectedness, Pro- Ecological Behavior, and Well-being” (Co-Investigator).
- 2025 **High Impact Research Award.** Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez. Awarded to the researcher at Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez with the highest impact in scientific research.
- 2024 **Internationalisation Award.** Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez. Recognises the researcher with outstanding international collaboration and research impact.
- 2024 **Research Support Program, Center of Social Conflict and Cohesion Studies (COES) ~ USD 4,000.** “Perception of Insecurity in Socially Vulnerable Populations and Its Impact on Empathy and Prosocial Behaviour” (Principal Investigator).
- 2024 **Research Support Program, Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez ~ USD 5,000.** Project: “Impact of social vulnerability on behavior and social cognition: An approach from

- neuroscience*" (Principal Investigator).
- 2016 – 2020 **Becas Chile PhD Scholarship. ~ USD 215,000.** National Agency for Research and Development (ANID). Government of Chile. *Graduate scholarship to pursue a PhD degree abroad.*
- 2019 **Wolfson College Travel Grant ~ USD 790.** University of Oxford. *Grant awarded to attend the 17<sup>th</sup> Society for Neuroeconomics Annual Meeting. October, Dublin, Ireland.*
- 2018 **Wolfson College Travel Grant ~ USD 790.** University of Oxford. *Grant awarded to attend Aegina Summer School 2018 "New Perspectives & Methods on Social Cognition". June, Aegina, Greece.*
- 2018 **Grindley Grant ~ USD 100.** Experimental Psychology Society, United Kingdom. *Grant awarded for the attendance of the Experimental Psychology Society Meeting.*
- 2014 – 2016 **National Fund for Scientific and Technological Development (FONDECYT 1140114). ~ USD 270,000.** National Agency for Research and Development (ANID). Government of Chile. Project "*Fluid Intelligence, Social Cognition, and Perspective Flexibility as Predictors of Psycho-social adaptability*" (Co-Investigator).
- 2011 – 2012 **Dean's Commendation Award for High Achievement.** University of Queensland, Australia. *Recognition for exemplary academic performance during MSc in Neuroscience studies.*
- 2011 - 2012 **Becas Chile MSc Scholarship ~ USD 100,000.** National Agency for Research and Development (ANID) Government of Chile. *Graduate scholarship to pursue a MSc degree abroad.*
- 2004 - 2008 **Juan Gómez Millas. BA Scholarship ~ USD 10,000.** Ministry of Education, Government of Chile. *Full coverage of undergraduate studies fees*
- 2004 - 2008 **Juan Araya Villarroel' BA Scholarship.** Universidad de Valparaíso, Chile. *Annual financial aid during undergraduate studies.*

## **SELECTED TALKS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

- 2026 **Why do we help others? Neural and psychological mechanisms of prosocial motivation.** Invited talk at the II Latin American Conference on Cognitive Neuroscience. March, virtual conference.
- 2025 **Understanding the Neural Mechanisms of Prosocial Motivation.** Invited talk at the Karolinska Institute. June, Stockholm, Sweden.
- 2024 **Perception of Insecurity in Socially Vulnerable Populations and Its Impact on Empathy and Prosocial Behaviour.** XI Annual Meeting of the Center of Social Conflict and Cohesion Studies (COES). November, Vina del Mar, Chile.
- 2022 **Affective and neural underpinnings of prosocial motivation.** Webinar organised by the translational neuroscience research group at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. September, virtual meeting
- 2022 **An ecological framework for prosocial behaviour: Foraging for others' rewards.** Computational Properties of the Prefrontal Cortex Meeting. March, Oxford, United Kingdom
- 2021 **Interoceptive sensitivity is associated with neural representation of others' rewards.** European Society for Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (ESCAN) Annual

- Meeting. June, virtual conference.
- 2021 **Common mechanisms underlie prosocial behaviour in multiple domains.** European Society for Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (ESCAN) Annual Meeting. June, virtual conference.
- 2020 **Interoceptive sensitivity modulates prosocial behaviour for others' rewards.** Society for Neuroeconomics Annual Meeting. October, virtual conference.
- 2019 **Prosocial behaviour is associated with transdiagnostic markers of affective sensitivity in multiple domains.** Society for Neuroeconomics Annual Meeting. October, Dublin, Ireland.
- 2018 **Computational mechanisms of social decision-making in sub-clinical personality disorder.** Experimental Psychology Society meeting. April, Leicester, United Kingdom.
- 2017 **Understanding empathy and prosocial behaviour in healthy and psychiatric population: A social neuroscience perspective.** Symposium on Neuroscience and Psychology organised by the School of Psychology at Universidad Diego Portales. December, Santiago, Chile.

### **INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH VISITS**

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- 2025 **University of Vienna.** Visiting researcher at the Social, Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience Unit, collaborating on studies of empathy and social decision-making.
- 2024 **University of Birmingham.** Visiting researcher at the Centre for Human Brain Health, conducting research on moral decision-making and prosocial behaviour.
- 2023 **University of Birmingham.** Visiting researcher at the Centre for Human Brain Health, conducting research on moral decision-making and prosocial behaviour.

### **ACADEMIC SERVICE**

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**Journal Reviewing:** E-Life, Communications Psychology, Psychological Science, Cortex, NeuroImage, Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (SCAN), Psychiatry Research, Biological Psychology, Journal of Alzheimer's Disease, Psychophysiology, Human Brain Mapping, Journal of the Royal Society, Journal of Environmental Psychology, Scientific Reports, PLOS Biology

**Grant Reviewing:** National Fund for Scientific and Technological Development (FONDECYT). Chilean National Research and Development Agency (ANID).

### **SELECTED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND SCIENCE COMMUNICATION**

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- 2023 - present Talks on Motivation, Social Behaviour and Decision-Making at different public and private organisations (e.g. General audience, Armada de Chile, Nestle, IST, Social Clubs, Sheraton Hotel, etc).
- 2025 Expert opinion at the piece "Scientists are 'most trusted' source of climate information in global-south survey" published in the UK online journal *Carbon Brief* [https://www.carbonbrief.org/scientists-are-most-trusted-source-of-climate-information-in-global-south-survey/?utm\\_content=buffer8b65c&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](https://www.carbonbrief.org/scientists-are-most-trusted-source-of-climate-information-in-global-south-survey/?utm_content=buffer8b65c&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

- 2025 **Column “Del consenso climático a la acción real”**. El Mercurio de Valparaíso (national newspaper). Column on how pro-environmental intentions could turn into actions.
- 2025 **Column “El cerebro como brújula de políticas públicas”**. El Mercurio de Valparaíso (national newspaper). Column on how neuroscience should have impact on public policy.
- 2024 **Panellist at *Congreso Futuro***. Panel: Neurosciences and New Intelligences, with Stanislas Dehaene, Patricio Orio and Jorge Gaona. *Annual event on scientific dissemination*.
- 2023 **Column “Ayudar hace bien”**. La Segunda (national newspaper). Column on how prosocial behaviour is beneficial for social cohesion and individual health.