

# KARA WEISMAN

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## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

### Stanford University, Department of Anthropology (remote)

Postdoctoral researcher / social science research professional (September 2019 – present)

Advisor: Tanya M. Luhmann

## EDUCATION

### Stanford University, Department of Psychology

Ph.D. in Psychology, specializing in developmental psychology (September 2019)

Thesis: *The Development of Conceptual Representations of Mental Life*

Advisors: Ellen M. Markman and Carol S. Dweck

Dissertation committee: Ellen M. Markman (chair), Carol S. Dweck, Hyowon Gweon, Michael C. Frank, James L. McClelland, and Mark Algee-Hewitt (external chair)

### Yale University

B.A., *magna cum laude*, with distinction in Cognitive Science (May 2009)

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

I study intuitive theories and conceptual change, with a focus on “folk philosophy of mind”—how children and adults come to understand things like mental life, sentience, and personhood. I am particularly interested in the ways that these conceptual representations do (and do not) vary across development, across cultural contexts, and across individuals. My research is grounded in theory and methods from developmental and cognitive psychology, and it is also informed by cultural psychology, anthropology, and philosophy, as well as recent advances in statistical modeling and computational cognitive science. I use a combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches to explore, describe, and test theories about conceptual representations.

## HONORS & AWARDS

Norman H. Anderson Research Fund Grant (2017)

Centennial Teaching Assistant Award (2016)

National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (2014-2019)

William R. and Sara Hart Kimball Stanford Graduate Fellowship (2013-2018)

Honorable mention, National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (2013)

Short-listed for the Crowder Prize for Undergraduate Research in Psychology (2009)

Mellon Forum Undergraduate Research Grant (2009)  
Libby Rouse Fund for Peace Fellowship (2008)  
Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology (2008)

## PUBLICATIONS

### *Peer-reviewed journal articles*

1. **Weisman, K.\***, & Luhmann, T.M.\* (in press). What anthropologists can learn from psychologists, and the other way around. *Mind and Spirit: A comparative theory about representation of mind and the experience of spirit*, a special issue of the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. [\*joint first authors]
2. Roberts, S.O., **Weisman, K.**, Lane, J.D., Williams, A., Camp, N.P., Wang, M., Robison, M., Sanchez, K., & Griffiths, C. (2020). Conceptualizing god as a white man: A psychological barrier to conceptualizing black people and women as leadership worthy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
3. **Weisman, K.**, Dweck, C.S., & Markman, E.M. (2017). Rethinking people's conceptions of mental life. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 114(43), 11374-9.
4. **Weisman, K.**, & Markman, E.M. (2017). Theory-based explanation as intervention. *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*, 24(5), 1555-1562.
5. Kim, S., Kalish, C.W., **Weisman, K.**, Johnson, M.V., & Shutts, K. (2016). Young children choose to inform previously knowledgeable others. *Journal of Cognition and Development*, 17(2), 320-40.
6. **Weisman, K.**, Johnson, M.V., & Shutts, K. (2015). Young children's automatic encoding of social categories. *Developmental Science*, 18(6), 1036-43.
7. Olson, K.R., Shutts, K., Kinzler, K.D., & **Weisman, K.G.** (2012). Children associate racial groups with wealth: Evidence from South Africa. *Child Development*, 83(6), 1884-99.

### *Peer-reviewed conference proceedings*

8. **Weisman, K.**, Dweck, C.S., & Markman, E.M. (2018). Folk philosophy of mind: Changes in conceptual structure between 4-9y of age. In *Proceedings of the 40th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.
9. Powell, D., **Weisman, K.**, & Markman, E.M. (2018). Articulating lay theories through graphical models: A study of beliefs surrounding vaccination decisions. In *Proceedings of the 40th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.
10. **Weisman, K.**, Dweck, C.S., & Markman, E.M. (2017). Children's intuitions about the structure of mental life. In *Proceedings of the 39th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.
11. **Weisman, K.**, Dweck, C.S., & Markman, E.M. (2016). Varieties of experience: A new look at folk philosophy of mind. In *Proceedings of the 38th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.
12. **Weisman, K.**, Markman, E.M., & Dweck, C.S. (2015). Reasoning about sentience and animacy: Children's and adults' inferences about the properties of unseen entities. In *Proceedings of the 37th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society*.

### *Manuscripts under review*

13. Luhrmann, T.M.\*, **Weisman, K.\***, Aulino, F., Brahinsky, J.D., Dulin, J.C., Dzokoto, V.A., Legare, C.H., Lifshitz, M., Ng., E., Ross-Zehnder, N., & Smith, R.E. (under review). Sensing the presence of gods and spirits across cultures and faiths. [\*joint first authors]
14. **Weisman, K.** (under review). Machines with minds: Beliefs about the mental lives of robots and implications for human social reasoning.
15. Letterie, M.C., Salo, V.C., Matsumoto, M., **Weisman, K.**, King, L.S., & Humphreys, K.L. (under review). Mothers' and fathers' perceptions of children's mental capacities and self-reported parenting behavior.

### *Manuscripts in preparation*

16. **Weisman, K.**, Dweck, C.S., & Markman, E.M. (in prep). Children's developing representations of mental life: Changes in conceptual structure and mental capacity attributions between 4-9y of age.
17. **Weisman, K.**, Legare, C.H., & Luhrmann, T.M. (in prep). Body, mind, and the enigma of emotions: Concepts of mental life across five cultural contexts.
18. **Weisman, K.**, King, L.S., & Humphreys, K.L. (in prep). Perceptions of the development of mental life.
19. Powell, D., **Weisman, K.**, & Markman, E.M. (in prep). Belief systems and their revision: A case study of vaccine skepticism.
20. Van Leeuwen, N., **Weisman, K.**, & Luhrmann, T.M. (in prep). "Think" and "believe" across cultures: A shared folk distinction between two cognitive attitudes in the US, Ghana, Thailand, China, and Vanuatu.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

### *Conference presentations*

1. **Weisman, K.**, Legare, C.H., & Luhrmann, T.M. (2019, March). Beliefs about the mental lives of supernatural beings: A cross-cultural comparison. Talk presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Baltimore, MD.
2. **Weisman, K.**, Dweck, C.S., & Markman, E.M. (2018, July). Folk philosophy of mind: Changes in conceptual structure between 4-9y of age. Talk presented at the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, Madison, WI.
3. Powell, D., **Weisman, K.**, & Markman, E.M. (2018, July). Articulating lay theories through graphical models: A study of beliefs surrounding vaccination decisions. Talk presented at the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, Madison, WI.
4. **Weisman, K.**, Dweck, C.S., & Markman (2017, October). The development of intuitions about the structure of mental life. Poster presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Cognitive Development Society, Portland, OR.
5. **Weisman, K.**, Dweck, C.S., & Markman, E.M. (2017, July). Children's intuitions about the structure of mental life. Talk presented at the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, London, UK.

6. **Weisman, K.**, Markman, E.M., & Dweck, C.S. (2017, April). Can robots feel hunger, think, and love? Children's and adults' beliefs about mental capacities. Talk presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Austin, TX.
7. **Weisman, K.**, Dweck, C.S., & Markman, E.M. (2016, July). Varieties of experience: A new look at folk philosophy of mind. Talk presented at the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, Philadelphia, PA.
8. **Weisman, K.**, Dweck, C.S., & Markman, E.M. (2016, June). Varieties of experience: A new look at folk philosophy of mind. Talk presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Austin, TX.
9. **Weisman, K.**, Dweck, C.S., & Markman (2015, October). Mapping people's conceptions of sentient beings: Judgments about the relative capacities of animals, humans, and technology. Poster presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Cognitive Development Society, Columbus, OH.
10. **Weisman, K.**, Markman, E.M., & Dweck, C.S. (2015, July). Reasoning about sentience and animacy: Children's and adults' inferences about the properties of unseen entities. Talk presented at the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, Pasadena, CA.
11. **Weisman, K.**, Markman, E.M., & Dweck, C.S. (2015, June). Reasoning about sentience: Inferences among capacities for affect, autonomy, & perception. Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Durham, NC.
12. Johnson, M.V., **Weisman, K.G.**, & Shutts, K. (2013, April). Young children's automatic encoding of social categories. Poster presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Seattle, WA.
13. **Weisman, K.G.**, Olson, K.R., Kinzler, K.D., & Shutts, K. (2011, April). Children associate race with social status: Evidence from South Africa. Poster presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Montreal, Canada.
14. Kim, S., Kalish, C., Shutts, K., & **Weisman, K.G.** (2011, April). Preschool children prefer to teach a previously knowledgeable person, not a previously ignorant person. Talk presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Montreal, Canada.

#### *Chaired symposia*

15. **Weisman, K.**, & Brink, K. (2017, April). Growing up with smart social robots: Animacy, mind, and morality. Symposium organized for the 2017 Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Austin, TX.

#### *Other talks*

16. *The development of conceptual representations of mental life* (2019, October), Virtue Project lunch talk meeting (PI: Katherine McAuliffe), Department of Psychology, Boston College
17. *Perceptions of the development of mental life* (2018, December), Spelke lab meeting (PI: Elizabeth Spelke), Department of Psychology, Harvard University
18. *Folk philosophy of mind: Conceptual representations of mental life in early and middle childhood* (2018, December), Child Cognition Lab meeting (PI: Deborah Keleman), Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences, Boston University

19. *Folk philosophy of mind: Conceptual representations of mental life in early and middle childhood* (2018, November), job talk, Department of Psychology, Harvard University
20. *Folk philosophy of mind: Changes in conceptual representations of mental life over early and middle childhood* (2018, November), Affective Brain Lab meeting (PI: Tali Sharot), Department of Experimental Psychology, University College London
21. *Concepts of mental life: Continuity and variability across development and cultures* (2018, September), Saxelab meeting (PI: Rebecca Saxe), Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
22. *Preliminary evidence for continuity and variability in children's intuitions about mental life across cultural contexts* (2018, May), Stanford-Berkeley-Santa Cruz annual developmental psychology conference, Department of Psychology, UC Santa Cruz
23. *Charting changes in conceptual structure: The development of reasoning about mental life between 4-9 years of age* (2017, December), Cog Lunch, Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
24. *Charting changes in conceptual structure: The development of reasoning about mental life between 4-9 years of age* (2017, November), Inter-departmental CogSci Training Seminar, Stanford University
25. *Charting changes in conceptual structure: The development of reasoning about mental life between 4-9 years of age* (2017, October), Cognitive & Neuroscience Areas Friday Seminar, Department of Psychology, Stanford University
26. *Children's intuitions about the structure of mental life* (2017, May), Stanford-Berkeley-Santa Cruz annual developmental psychology conference, Department of Psychology, Stanford University
27. *Children's intuitions about the structure of mental life* (2017, April), Developmental Area Brownbag, Department of Psychology, UT-Austin
28. *Body, soul, and mind: Folk intuitions about the structure of mental life* (2016, November), Lightning Talk Colloquium, Department of Psychology, Stanford University
29. *Mapping a lay philosophy of mind: Judgments of the relative capacities of humans, animals, and technology* (2015, October), Cognitive & Neuroscience Areas Friday Seminar, Department of Psychology, Stanford University
30. *Children's reasoning about emotion, perception, and autonomy* (2014, October), Staff Development Day, Bing Nursery School, Stanford University
31. *Reasoning about sentience: Psychological connections among affect, autonomy, and perception* (2014, May), Stanford-Berkeley-Santa Cruz annual developmental psychology conference, Department of Psychology, Stanford University

[As well as several presentations in the Stanford psychology department's Developmental Area brownbag talk series]

## TEACHING & DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE

All teaching & departmental service completed at Stanford University. 'UG' indicates undergraduate-level courses; 'G' indicates graduate-level courses.

### *Co-instructor*

1. PSYCH 113S (UG): Developmental Psychology (Summer 2016)

### *Teaching assistant*

2. PSYCH 141 (UG): Cognitive Development (Spring 2017)
3. PSYCH 10 (UG): Introduction to Statistical Methods: Pre-calculus (Winter 2017)
4. PSYCH 253 (G): Statistical Theory, Models, & Methodology (Spring 2016)
5. PSYCH 175 (UG): Early Learning & Social Cognition (Winter 2016)
6. PSYCH 60 (UG): Introduction to Developmental Psychology (Fall 2015)
7. PSYCH 252 (G): Statistical Methods for Behavioral & Social Sciences (Fall 2014)

### *Guest lecturer*

8. *Social Categories*, PSYCH 141 (UG): Cognitive Development (Fall 2017)
9. *Social Categories*, PSYCH 141 (UG): Cognitive Development (Spring 2017)
10. *Signal Detection Theory & Ordinal Regression*, PSYCH 253 (G): Statistical Theory, Models, & Methodology (Spring 2016)
11. *Race, Gender, & Social Groups*, PSYCH 60 (UG): Introduction to Developmental Psychology (Fall 2015)

### *Grader*

12. PSYCH 10 (UG): Introduction to Statistical Methods: Pre-calculus (Winter 2015)

### *Other departmental service*

13. Department statistics committee member (2016-2018)
14. Department statistics consultant (2016-2017)
15. R "boot camp" developer and instructor for incoming graduate students (2015, 2016, 2017)
16. Developmental area graduate admissions committee member (2016, 2017)
17. R "boot camp" developer and instructor for the Center for the Study of Language and Information (CSLI) summer internship program (2016)
18. Co-organizer for Prospective Students Weekend (2016)
19. Admissions committee member, Center for the Study of Language and Information (CSLI) summer internship program (2016)
20. Co-organizer for Developmental Area Brownbag talk series (2014-15, 2015-16)

## **MENTORING**

### **Stanford University, Department of Psychology**

*Graduate student mentor for undergraduate research assistants*

Alex Nam (2017-2018), Kyla Zhao (2017-2018), Catherine Xie (2017-2018), Bobby Radecki (2017-2018), Ariel Yu (2016-2018), Olivia Homer (2016-2018), Shea Cours (2017), Carinne Gale (2017), J. Nicky Sullivan (2016-2017), L. Dru Brenner (2016-2017), Mona Matsumoto-Ryan (2016-2017), Caroline Young (2016), Malaika Murphy-Sierra (2016), Jorge Chaparro (2015-2016), Co Tran (2014-2015), Kathy Garcia (2014)

*Graduate student mentor for local and visiting interns*

Catherine Xie, Stanford University (Psychology), Psych Summer intern (2017)  
Campbell Field, Dartmouth College (Cognitive Science), intern (2016-2017)  
Olivia Homer, Stanford University (Psychology), Psych Summer intern (2016)  
Alexandra Kelly, Temple University (Linguistics), Center for the Study of Language & Information (CSLI) intern (2016)  
L. Dru Brenner, Stanford University (Psychology), Psych Summer intern (2015)  
Marlene Ade, John F. Kennedy High School, Fremont, CA, Raising Interest in Science and Engineering (RISE) intern (2014)

### **Stanford University, Department of Anthropology**

*Graduate student mentor for research assistants and staff*

Nana Ansuah Peterson (Stanford University; 2017-2019), Maria Russo (Stanford University; 2017-2019), James Sharpe (Wheaton College; 2017)

*Supervisor for international research teams*

San Francisco Bay Area, USA; Amazonia, Ecuador; Cape Coast, Ghana; Chiang Mai, Thailand; Shanghai, China; Port Vila & Malekula, Vanuatu (2017-2019)

### **University of Virginia, Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning**

*Supervisor and mentor for research assistants, interns, and staff*

Melissa Avalos (2013), Ejana Bennett (2013), Colleen Coyne (2013), Ellen Gorski (2013), Dylan Holt (2013), Katherine Kegley (2013), Christina Li (2013), Genevieve Matthew (2013), Emily Rakosi (2013), William Simpson (2013), Ka Eun Song (2013), Sarah Vogel (2013), Christina Young (2013), Brittney Lumpkin (2012-2013), Toby Loewenstein (2012-2013), O'tillia Roberts (2012-2013), Stephen Lastova (2012)

### **University of Wisconsin-Madison, Department of Psychology**

*Supervisor and mentor for research assistants and interns*

Marissa Johnson (2009-2011), Renee Kramer (2009-2011), Lauren Huckstadt (2009-2011), Amy Klazkin (2010-2011), Jasmine Morano (2010-2011), Kelsey Dewey (2011), Leah Dornbusch (2011), Althea Miller (2010), Stephanie Castillo (2010), Leah Hoosain (Cape Town, South Africa; 2010), Nomathamsanqa Hlatshwayo (Cape Town, South Africa; 2010), Nande Mabona (Cape Town, South Africa; 2010)

## ADDITIONAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

### Department of Anthropology, Stanford University

2016-2019: Researcher, Mind & Spirit Project (PI: Tanya M. Luhmann)

### Department of Psychology, Harvard University

2018-2019: Visiting fellow (PI: Elizabeth Spelke)

2011-2013: Research and editorial assistant (remote, half-time), Laboratory for Developmental Studies (PI: Elizabeth S. Spelke)

### Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, University of Virginia

2011-2013: Co-research coordinator, research and development assistant (half-time), Preschool Relationships Enhancement Project (PI: Amanda Williford) and Effective Classroom Interactions (PI: Bridget Hamre)

### Department of Psychology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

2009-2011: Lab manager, Social Kids Lab (PI: Kristin Shutts, Ph.D.)

### Department of Cognitive Science, Yale University

2008-2009: Senior thesis: "Memory for specific sensory stimuli: Absolute pitch and the possibility of 'absolute hue'" (Advisor: David A. Ross)

2008: Independent reading course on the cognitive science of the self (Advisor: Tamar Szabó Gendler)

### Department of Psychology, Yale University

2008-2009: Lab manager, research assistant, Thinking Lab (PI: Woo-Kyung Ahn)

2007: Research assistant, Psychopathology & Cognitive Processing Lab (PI: Teresa A. Treat)

### Humanities Program, Yale University

2005-2006: Directed Studies: freshman-year program in Western civilization

## REFERENCES

#### *Current postdoc advisor:*

**Prof. Tanya M. Luhmann**  
Department of Anthropology  
Stanford University  
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(659) 723-3421

#### *Ph.D. advisors:*

**Prof. Ellen M. Markman**  
Department of Psychology  
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**Prof. Carol S. Dweck**  
Department of Psychology  
Stanford University  
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#### *Quantitative references:*

**Prof. Ewart A. C. Thomas**  
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Stanford University  
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(Emeritus)

**Prof. James L. McClelland**  
Department of Psychology  
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