

Aarthi Papat

she/her

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EDUCATION

PhD, Psychology, Yale University exp. 2029

Committee: Julia Leonard, Yarrow Dunham, Jennifer Richeson

Focus: How children use statistical reasoning to make inferences about diversity, equity, and competence

B.A.H., Psychology, Stanford University 2017 — 2021

Minor: Data Science

Honors Thesis: The extrapolation of individual directional comparisons to group stereotypes

Thesis Advisor: Ellen Markman

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Lab Coordinator, Early Learning & Cognition Lab (PI: Caren Walker), *UCSD* 2021 — 2023

Lab Coordinator, Comparative Cognition Lab (PI: Federico Rossano), *UCSD* 2022 — 2023

Research Assistant, Markman Lab, *Stanford* 2019 — 2021

PUBLICATIONS

***Popat, A.K.**, *Amemiya, J., Heyman, G.D., & Walker, C.M. (2025). Hiding discrimination in plain sight: The development of reasoning about disparate impact policies. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*.

Popat, A.K., Leonard, J.A., Richeson, J.A., & Dunham, Y. (submitted). “I’m here for my identity, not my skill”: Causal attribution shapes self-beliefs in response to diversity messaging.

Popat, A.K. & Dunham, Y. (in preparation). Cognitive and social foundations of competency judgments in DEI contexts.

Popat, A.K., Goddu, M., Lapidow, L., Katz, T., & Walker, C.M. (in preparation). Young children use abstract concepts to infer novel causal outcomes from variability.

* indicates shared first authorship.

BOOK CHAPTERS

Dunham, Y., Sohail, S., Aldan, P., & **Popat, A. K.** (in press). Developmental perspectives on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Popat, A.K. & Leonard, J.A. (2025). Just unlucky?: Children are sensitive to the cause of rejection. *Proceedings of the Cognitive Science Society*.

Popat, A.K. & Leonard, J.A. (2024). “I’m here for my gender, not my skill”: Causal reasoning shapes beliefs about merit in response to DEI initiatives. *Proceedings of the Cognitive Science Society*. [PDF]

Popat, A.K. & Dunham, Y. (2024). “I’m going to choose a Hibble”: Social and statistical reasoning in DEI contexts. *Proceedings of the Cognitive Science Society*. [PDF]

Popat, A.K., Amemiya, J., Heyman, G.D., & Walker, C.M. (2024). The Hair Club for Boys: How children and adults judge disparate impact rules. *Proceedings of the Cognitive Science Society*. [PDF]

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Popat, A.K. & Johansson, A. (2026). Exploring gender differences in quitting from learning. Invited talk at EdAptiv Lab Meeting, Amsterdam.

Popat, A.K., Leonard, J.A., & Dunham, Y. (2026). Children’s use of equity vs. equality based strategies to rectify under-representation. Talk at Cognitive Development Society, Montreal.

- Popat, A.K.** & Leonard, J.A. (2025). Just unlucky? Children are sensitive to the cause of rejection. Talk at Cognitive Science Society, San Francisco.
- Popat, A.K.** & Dunham, Y. (2025). Cognitive and moral factors shape competency judgments in DEI contexts. Poster at Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Ithaca.
- Popat, A.K.**, Amemiya, J., Heyman, G.D., & Walker, C.M. (2024). The Hair Club for Boys: How children and adults judge disparate impact rules. Talk at Cognitive Science Society, Rotterdam.
Diversity & Social Inequality Award
- Popat, A.K.** & Dunham, Y. (2024). “I’m going to choose a Hibble”: Social and statistical reasoning in DEI contexts. Poster at Cognitive Science Society, Rotterdam.
- Popat, A.K.** & Leonard, J.A. (2024). “I’m here for my gender, not my skill”: Causal reasoning shapes beliefs about merit in response to DEI initiatives. Poster at Cognitive Science Society, Rotterdam.
- Popat, A.K.**, Goddu, M., Lapidow, L., Katz, T., & Walker, C.M. (2024). Young children use abstract concepts to infer novel causal outcomes from variability. Talk at Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Lafayette.
- Popat, A.K.**, Amemiya, J., Heyman, G.D., & Walker, C.M. (2024). The Hair Club for Boys: How children and adults judge disparate impact rules. Poster at Cognitive Development Society, Pasadena.
- Popat, A.K.** (2024). Causal reasoning as a driver of social inference. Invited talk at Developmental Brownbag, UCSD.
- Popat, A.K.**, Amemiya, J., Heyman, G.D., & Walker, C.M. (2024). The Hair Club for Boys: How children and adults judge disparate impact rules. Poster at Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Diego.
- Popat, A.K.**, Amemiya, J., Heyman, G.D., & Walker, C.M. (2023). The Hair Club for Boys: How children and adults judge disparate impact rules. Poster at Society for Philosophy and Psychology, Pittsburgh.
Best Poster Prize

AWARDS

Diversity & Social Inequality Award (\$1,000). Cognitive Science Society.	2024
Best Poster Prize (\$100). Society for Philosophy and Psychology.	2023
Neubauer Fellowship (\$10,000 yearly; declined). University of Chicago.	2023
Engberg Fellowship (\$1,000; declined). New York University.	2023
Major Grant (\$7,500). Stanford University.	2020
PsychSummer Grant (\$7,500). Stanford University.	2019

MENTORSHIP

Honors Thesis Students

Morgan Alverson (Yale)	2026
Honors Thesis: “Little Agents of Change: Proto-political ideology relates to children’s equity behavior” <i>Awarded the Yale Angier Prize</i>	
Sara Cao (Yale)	2026
Honors Thesis: “Between the (Red) Lines: The enduring effects of residential segregation on racial bias”	
Narek Harutyunyan (UCSD)	2026
Honors Thesis: “Who Did the Better Experiment?: Children’s social biases in scientific evaluation” <i>Awarded the UCSD Excellence in Peer Mentorship Award</i>	
Lauren Okine (Yale)	2024
Honors Thesis: “Token or Talent?: Causal reasoning shapes beliefs about merit in response to DEI initiatives”	
Ashna Singh (UCSD)	2022
Honors Thesis: “Who did the Better Experiment?: Children’s use of social hypotheses in causal reasoning” <i>Awarded the UCSD Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research</i>	

Research Assistants

Khalab Blagburn (Pomona College)	2025-
<i>Awarded the Beinecke Scholarship</i>	
Hannah Kim (UT Austin)	2025

Zein Saleh (UNL), incoming PhD student at Northwestern in social psychology

2024

REFERENCES

Julia Leonard

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E-mail: julia.leonard@yale.edu

Scholar Profiles: Yale University — Google Scholar

Yarrow Dunham

Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Yale University

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Scholar Profiles: Yale University — Google Scholar

Caren Walker

Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, University of California, San Diego

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Scholar Profiles: UCSD — Google Scholar

Jamie Amemiya

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Occidental College

E-mail: amemiya@oxy.edu

Scholar Profiles: Occidental — Google Scholar