

## CURRENT ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Post-doctoral Researcher	The Wharton School and the School of Arts and Sciences University of Pennsylvania
Visiting Scholar	Department of Psychology, Arizona State University

## EDUCATION

Ph.D.	Psychology	Arizona State University	Tempe, AZ	2023
M.A.	Psychology	Yonsei University	Seoul, Korea	2017
B.A.	Psychology & Cognitive Science	Yonsei University	Seoul, Korea	2015

## HONORS, GRANTS, & AWARDS

Postdoctoral Award, <i>Human Behavior and Evolution Society</i>	2025
Finalist for the New Investigator Award, <i>Human Behavior and Evolution Society</i>	2024
Top Ten Most Impactful Articles of 2021, <i>Association for Psychological Science</i>	2022
Faculty Women's Association Distinguished Graduate Student Award, ASU	2022
Outstanding Research Award, <i>ASU Graduate and Professional Student Association</i>	2022
Darwyn and Marie Linder Graduate Fellowship, <i>Department of Psychology, ASU</i>	2022
Outstanding Research Award, <i>Society for Personality and Social Psychology</i>	2020
The College Graduate Excellence Award, ASU	2019, 20, 22
JumpStart Seed Research Grant, <i>ASU Graduate and Professional Student Association</i>	2018
Research Excellence Award, <i>Department of Psychology, ASU</i>	2017
Brain Korea 21+ Scholarship, <i>Ministry of Science, ICT, and Future Planning</i>	2015

## PUBLICATIONS

- Ko, A., & Neuberg, S. L. (2025). [Target Article] Ecological affordances across life stages: An affordance management framework. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. [Paper](#)
- Duckworth, A. L., Ko, A., Milkman, K. L. ... & Van den Bulte, C. (2025). A national megastudy shows that email nudges to elementary school teachers boost student math achievement, particularly when personalized. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 122(13), e2418616122. [Paper](#); [OSF](#); [Penn Today](#); [Knowledge by Wharton](#)
- Ko, A., Neuberg, S. L., Pick, C. M., Varnum, M. E. W., & Becker, D. V. (2024). Responses to political partisans are shaped by a COVID-sensitive disease avoidance psychology: A longitudinal investigation of functional flexibility. *American Psychologist*, 80(2), 193–205. [Paper](#); [OSF](#); [The Conversation](#)
- Postdoctoral Award from the Human Behavior and Evolution Society (2025)**
- Kirsch, A., Kenrick, D. T., Ko, A., Pick, C. M., & Varnum, M. E. W. (2024). Sibling aggression is surprisingly common and sexually egalitarian. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 45(2), 214–227. [Paper](#); [OSF](#)
- Ko, A., Bock, J. E., Ko, J., & Krems, J. A. (2023). Contagious or prosocial? Perceptions of mask-wearers toward Whites and Asians: A cross-cultural comparison during the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 17(11), e12880. [Paper](#); [OSF](#)
- Ko, A., Suh, E. M., Shin, J., & Neuberg, S. L. (2023). Functionally calibrating life satisfaction: The case of mating motives and self-perceived mate value. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 24(2), 651–675. [Paper](#)
- Pick, C. M., Ko, A., Wormley, A. S., Wiezel, A., Kenrick, D. T., ... & Varnum, M. E. W. (2022). Family still matters: Human social motivation across 42 countries during a global pandemic. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 43(6), 527–535. [Paper](#); [OSF](#); [Psychology Today](#)

- Pick, C., **Ko, A.**, Kenrick, D. T., Wiesel, A., Wormley, A. S., Awad, E., ... & Varnum, M. E. W. (2022). Fundamental social motives measured across 42 cultures in two waves. *Scientific Data*, 9(1), 1-12. [Paper](#); [OSF](#)
- Barlev, M., **Ko, A.**, Krems, J. A., & Neuberg, S. L. (2022). Weight location moderates weight-based self-devaluation and perceived social devaluation in women. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 19485506211060724. [Paper](#); [OSF](#)
- Krems, J. A., **Ko, A.**, Moon, J. W., & Varnum, M. E. W. (2021). Sexually unrestricted women are perceived as having low self-esteem: First evidence for a pervasive, robust (but unfounded) stereotype. *Psychological Science*, 32(6), 871-889. [Paper](#); [OSF](#); [SPSP Character & Context Blog](#); [The Conversation](#); [The APS Observer](#)  
**Top Ten Most Impactful Articles in 2021 from the Association for Psychological Science (2022)**
- Ko, A.**, Pick, C. M., Kwon, J., Barlev, M., ... & Kenrick, D. T. (2020). Family matters: The psychology of human social motivation. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 15, 173-201. [Paper](#); [OSF](#); [The APS Observer](#); [US News & World Report](#)  
**Outstanding Research Award from the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (2020)**
- Ko, A.**, & Suh, E. M. (2019). Does physical attractiveness buy happiness? Women's mating motivation and happiness. *Motivation and Emotion*, 43(1), 1-11. [Paper](#)
- Becker, D. V., Rheem, H., Pick, C. M., **Ko, A.**, & Lafko, S. R. (2019). Angry faces hold attention: Evidence of attentional adhesion in two paradigms. *Progress in Brain Research*, 247. [Paper](#)

#### UNDER REVIEW & IN PREPARATION

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- Ko, A.**, Kenrick, D. T., Becker, D. V., & Varnum, M. E. W. (*under review*). Sex differences in fundamental social motives across life stages and societies.
- Ko, A.** (*in preparation; manuscript drafted*) Psychological flexibility in response to changes in ecological affordances: Implications of changing COVID-19 rates on disease psychology
- Ko, A.**, Becker, D. V., & Neuberg, S. L. (*in preparation; data collection complete*). Rethinking American diversity: Evidence for context-dependent diversity.
- Williams, K. E. G., Krems, J. A., **Ko, A.**, & Sznycer, D. (*in preparation; manuscript drafted*). Greater bipartisan support for ecology- over race-based college admissions in the United States.

#### INVITED TALKS

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| 2025 | University of Pennsylvania, Social Psychology Group   |
| 2024 | Yonsei University, South Korea<br>University of Pennsylvania, Center for Social Norms and Behavioral Dynamics<br>University of California, Los Angeles, Social Minds Lab (Jaimie Krems) |
| 2023 | University of Toronto, MacLab (Geoff MacDonald)<br>Adelphi University   |
| 2022 | Williams College<br>Oklahoma State University, The OCEAN (Oklahoma Center for Evolutionary Analysis)  |

#### CONFERENCES

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underlined = supervised undergraduate students

##### Symposium

- "Leveraging Megastudies to Identify Socially Impactful Interventions" (2025, February). Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference, Denver, Colorado  
 - Speakers: **Ahra Ko**, Jan Voelkel, Madalina Vlasceanu, Sean Ellis
- "From Walkability to Pathogens to Seasonality: Multilevel Influences of Ecology on Psychological and Cultural Dynamics" (2024, October). Society of Experimental Social Psychology, Santa Fe, New Mexico.  
 - Speakers: **Ahra Ko** (Chair), Shige Oishi, Mark Schaller, Michael Varnum

- "Human values: An integrative perspective" (2023, October). Society of Experimental Social Psychology, Madison, Wisconsin.  
 - Speakers: **Ahra Ko**, Daniel Sznycer, Joshua Jackson, Igor Grossmann
- "COVID, Disease Psychology, and Politics" (2022, June). Human Behavior & Evolution Society Conference, Virtual.  
 - Speakers: **Ahra Ko** (Chair), Michael Bang Peterson, Lene Aarøe, Lei Fan
- "The Invisible Hand of Family: Why and How Kin Matter" (2020, February). Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana.  
 - Speakers: **Ahra Ko** (Co-chair), Debra Lieberman, Oliver Sng, Jonathan Schultz

#### Paper Presentation

- Ko, A.**, Neuberg, S. L., Pick, C. M., Varnum, M. E. W., & Becker, D. V. (2025, June). *Politics, Pathogens, and Perception: Tracking Adaptive Shifts in the Behavioral Immune System in Real Time*. Human Behavior and Evolution Society, Atlantic City, New Jersey. **[Postdoctoral Award]**
- Ko, A.**, Duckworth, A. L., & Milkman, K. L. (2025, February). *Nudging teachers to increase math achievement among 3 million students*. Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference, Denver, Colorado.
- Ko, A.**, Neuberg, S. L., Pick, C. M., Varnum, M. E. W., & Becker, D. V. (2024, October). *Within-person functional flexibility of the behavioral immune system in response to ecological changes*. Society of Experimental Social Psychology, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
- Ko, A.**, Duckworth, A. L., & Milkman, K. L. (2024, February). *A 140,000-teacher megastudy of email nudges to encourage math progress*. Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference, San Diego, California.
- Ko, A.**, Pick, C. M., Varnum, M. E. W., & Kenrick, D. T. (2023, October). *Valuing motives: A cross-cultural analysis of fundamental social motives in 42 countries before and during the pandemic*. Society of Experimental Social Psychology, Madison, Wisconsin.
- Ko, A.**, Pick, C. M., Varnum, M. E. W., Becker, D. V., & Neuberg, S. L. (2022, June). *Responses to partisans are calibrated by a COVID-sensitive behavioral immune system*. Human Behavior & Evolution Society Conference, Virtual.
- Kirsch, A., Kenrick, D. T., **Ko, A.**, Pick, C. M., & Varnum, M. E. W. (2022, June). *Differences in aggression among kin and non-kin*. Human Behavior & Evolution Society Conference, Virtual.
- Cohen, A. B., Moon, J. W., & **Ko, A.** (2022, May). *Individual differences and ecological influences interact to predict anti-atheist prejudice*. APS Annual Conference, Chicago, Illinois.
- Kirsch, A., Kenrick, D. T., **Ko, A.**, Pick, C. M., & Varnum, M. E. W. (2022, April). *Differences in aggression among kin and non-kin*. Northeastern Evolutionary Psychology Society.
- Ko, A.**, Pick, C. M., Varnum, M. E. W., Becker, D. V., & Neuberg, S. L. (2022, February). *Threat-based antipathy toward Republicans is calibrated within individuals by a disease psychology sensitive to COVID cases*. Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference, San Francisco, California.
- Bock, J., **Ko, A.**, & Krems, J. A. (2021, February). *Explicit and implicit evaluations of mask-wearers during the COVID-19 pandemic*. Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference, Virtual.
- Ko, A.**, Pick, C. M., Kwon, J., Barlev, M., Krems, J. A., Varnum, M. E. W., & Kenrick, D. T. (2020, February). *Family matters: Rethinking the psychology of human social motivation*. Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference, New Orleans, Louisiana. **[Outstanding Research Award]**
- Krems, J. A., **Ko, A.**, Moon, J. W., & Varnum, M. E. W. (2019, October). *Sexually unrestricted women are perceived as having low self-esteem: First evidence for a pervasive, persistent, robust (but unfounded) stereotype*. Society for Experimental Social Psychology, Toronto, Canada.
- Ko, A.**, Suh, E. M., Shin, J., & Neuberg, S. L. (2019, May). *Functionally calibrating life satisfaction: The case of mating motives and self-perceived mate value*. Human Behavior and Evolution Society, Boston, Massachusetts.
- Ko, A.**, & Suh, E. M. (2016, August). *Self-perceived mate value and happiness*. International Society for

Quality of Life Research conference, Seoul, South Korea.

Shin, J., Suh, E. M., Kim, J., & **Ko, A.** (2015, May). *Romantic motives make the relative aspects of happiness salient*. Korea Social and Personality Psychological Association conference, Seoul, South Korea.

#### Poster Presentation

**Ko, A.**, Duckworth, A. L., & Milkman, K. L. (2024, November). *Nudging teachers: A megastudy to increase math achievement among 3 million elementary school students*. Society for Judgment and Decision Making conference, New York City, New York.

Palo, A., **Ko, A.**, & Neuberg, S. N. (2023, April). *Punishing good outcomes & punishing good intentions: Contrasting punishment decisions made by direct recipients vs. third-party*. Arizona Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference (AZPURC). **[Third Best Poster Award]**

Sabree, K., **Ko, A.**, Neuberg, S. N., & Kenrick, D. T. (2021, April). *Are you my father? Paternal uncertainty and genetic testing*. Arizona Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference (AZPURC), Virtual.

**Ko, A.**, Becker, D.V., & Neuberg, S.L. (2021, February). *Is AAAB more diverse than ABBB? On judging diversity*. Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference.

Rheem, H., **Ko, A.**, & Becker, D. V. (2019, November). *Conflict evoked by counter-stereotypical implicit associations is processed by the conflict monitoring mechanism like Stroop stimuli*. Psychonomic Society conference, Montréal, Québec, CA.

Defelipe, R. P., Crispim, A. C., Ferreira, J. H. B. P., Varella, M. A. C., Valentova, J. V., Varnum, M. E W., Pick, C. M., **Ko, A.**, & Kenrick, D. T. (2019, September). *Reproductive effort as the best predictor of life satisfaction: Evidence from a Brazilian sample*. International Society for Human Ethology, Zadar, Croatia.

**Ko, A.**, Suh, E. M., & Neuberg, S. L. (2019, January). *Is life satisfaction calibrated by self-perceived mate value?* Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference, Portland, Oregon.

**Ko, A.**, Suh, E.M., & Neuberg, S.L. (2018, July). *Is life satisfaction calibrated by self-perceived mate value?* Human Behavior and Evolution Society conference, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

**Ko, A.**, Suh, E.M., & Neuberg, S.L. (2018, March) Q: *Is happiness predicted by self-perceived mate value?* A: *Am I a man or a woman?* Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference, Atlanta, GA.

**Ko, A.**, Kim, E., & Suh, E.M. (2017, January). *Sex differences in self-perceived mate value and happiness*. Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference, San Antonio, TX.

Kim, E., Song, Y., **Ko, A.**, & Suh, E.M. (2017, January). *The relationship between fetal testosterone (digit ratio) and happiness*. Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference, San Antonio, TX.

**Ko, A.**, Kim, E., & Suh, E.M. (2016, January). *Women's hormonal fluctuation and happiness judgment: Physical attractiveness matters more during the high fertility phase*. Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference, San Diego, CA.

Kim, E., **Ko, A.**, & Suh, E.M. (2016, January). *Incremental theory of physical attractiveness and happiness among Koreans*. Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference, San Diego, CA.

Shin, J., Suh, E.M., Kim, J., & **Ko, A.** (2016, January). *Romantic motives make the relative aspects of happiness salient*. Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference, San Diego, CA.

#### Travel Awards

2023 Interview Grant, ASU Graduate and Professional Student Association

2022 The Graduate College Travel Award, ASU Graduate College [×2]  
Family Care Grant, The Society for Personality and Social Psychology

2019 Graduate Travel Award, The Society for Personality and Social Psychology

2017 - 2023 Travel Grant, ASU Graduate and Professional Student Association [×7]

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCES

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### Graduate Research Assistant

- 2020 - 2021 National Science Foundation Grant  
RAPID: Implications of Coronavirus for Prejudices, Cultural Change, and Health  
Steven L. Neuberg (PI), Michael E. W. Varnum, & D. Vaughn Becker
- 2018 - 2021 National Science Foundation Grant  
Fundamental Social Motives and Subjective Well-being Around the World  
Michael E. W. Varnum (PI) & Douglas T. Kenrick

### Research Laboratory Experience

- 2017 - 2023 Evolution, Ecology, and Social Behavior Lab, ASU. (Steven L. Neuberg)
- 2017 - 2023 Evolutionary Social Cognition Lab, ASU.  
(Douglas T. Kenrick, Steven L. Neuberg, D. Vaughn Becker)
- 2017 - 2019 Culture & Ecology Lab, ASU. (Michael E. W. Varnum)
- 2015 - 2017 Personality and Social Psychology Lab, Yonsei University. (Eunkook M. Suh)

## TEACHING EXPERIENCES

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### Instructor of Record

- 2022 Social Psychology (75.3% *Most Positive*; 22.1% *Positive*)

### Teaching Assistant

- 2020 Personality Theory/Research (Virginia Kwan)  
Intimate Relationships (Christina Pedram)
- 2019 Introduction to Psychology (Whitney Hansen)  
Research Methods (Thao Ha)
- 2018 Positive Psychology (Robert Short)  
Social Psychology (Robert Short)  
Social Psychology (Michael Varnum)
- 2017 Consumer Psychology (Lynda Mae)  
Introduction to Psychology (Lynda Mae)

## MENTORSHIP EXPERIENCES

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### Undergraduate Research Project Supervision

- 2023 Spring [Applied research method project; ENERGIZE mentorship] Augusto-Jovito Palo  
"Punishing good outcomes & punishing good intentions:  
Contrasting punishment decisions made by direct recipients vs. third-party observers"  
**Third Best Poster Award at the Arizona Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference**
- 2021 Spring [Independent research project] Taylor Jackson  
"An affordance-management approach toward intergenerational messages"
- 2020 Fall [Honor thesis] Kaelyn Sabree  
"Parental uncertainty and genetic testing"
- 2018 Spring [Independent research project] Victoria Mortenson  
"An affordance-management approach to anti-transgender prejudice"
- 2018 Fall [Honor thesis] Kirsten Holtz  
"Stereotypes and prejudices toward transgender"

**Selected Mentees Who Advanced to Ph.D. Programs**

Ben Gelbart, University of California, Santa Barbara  
Shelby Weathers, University of Pennsylvania  
Kaelyn Sabree, University of Michigan  
Cora Baron, University of California, Santa Barbara  
Madeline Paxson, Princeton University  
Ramon Silvera Zumaran, Carnegie Mellon University  
Seth Cannon, University of Maryland  
Mia Simmons, University of Notre Dame

**SERVICES**

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**Ad Hoc Manuscript Review**

*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Psychological Science, Scientific Reports, Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, Journal of Happiness Studies, Personality and Individual Differences, Motivation and Emotion, Current Research in Ecological and Social Psychology, Journal of Social Psychology, Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, Evolutionary Behavioral Science, Social Cognition, Communications Psychology, Child & Youth Care Forum*

**Ad Hoc Grant Review**

ASU Graduate and Professional Student Association

**Conference Submission Review**

Society for Personality and Social Psychology

**Service to the Field**

Co-organizer, Evolutionary Psychology Preconference at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference: 2025-2027

**Departmental Service**

2019 - 2021 Graduate Lab Manager for Evolutionary Social Cognition Lab, ASU.  
2020 - 2022 Social Psychology Graduate Admissions Committee, ASU  
2019 - 2020 Social Psychology Colloquium Representative, ASU.  
2018 - 2021 Social Psychology Graduate Student Peer Mentor, ASU.

**REFERENCES**

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**Steven L. Neuberg**  
Foundation Professor  
Arizona State University  
steven.neuberg@asu.edu

**Douglas T. Kenrick**  
President's Professor  
Arizona State University  
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**Angela L. Duckworth**  
Rosa Lee and Egbert Chang Professor  
University of Pennsylvania  
duckwort@wharton.upenn.edu