

CATHERINE COLE THOMAS
Department of Psychology, Stanford University
ccthomas@stanford.edu, +1 601-750-1960

POSITIONS

Assistant Professor, Psychology and Organizational Studies, University of Michigan 2023 –
Postdoctoral Scholar, Psychology, Stanford University 2022 – 2023

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Social Psychology, Stanford University 2022
Dissertation title: *Can psychologically and culturally wise narratives of aid better interrupt cycles of poverty and prejudice? Evidence from Kenya, Niger, and the US*
Advisors: Hazel Markus, Gregory Walton

M.Sc., Global Mental Health, University of London 2014

B.A., Sociocultural Anthropology, Yale University 2012
Distinction in Anthropology, *cum laude*

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Keywords: Culture, Wise Interventions, Poverty & Inequality, Behavioral Science and Social Policy, Narratives, Prejudice, Field Experiments

PUBLICATIONS

- [1] **Thomas, C. C.**, & Markus, H.R. (2023). Enculturating the science of international development: Beyond the WEIRD independent paradigm. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 54(2), 195-214. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220221221128211>.
- [2] **Thomas, C.C.**, Walton, G.M., Reinhart, E.C., & Markus, H.R. (2023). Mitigating welfare-related prejudice and partisanship among U.S. conservatives with moral reframing of a universal basic income policy. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 105, 104424. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2022.104424>
- [3] Bossuoy, T., Goldstein, M., Karlan, D., Kazianga, H., Parienté, W., Premand, P., **Thomas, C. C.**, Udry, C., Vaillant, J., & Wright, K. (2022). Tackling Psychosocial and Capital Constraints Opens Pathways out of Poverty. *Nature*, 605(7909), 291-297. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-04647-8>¹

¹ Alphabetical author order

[4] **Thomas, C.C.†**, Otis, N.G.†, Abraham, J.R., Markus, H.R., & Walton, G.M. (2020). Towards a science of delivering dignity in aid: Experimental evidence and forecasts from Kenya. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 117(27), 15546-15553. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1917046117>

[5] Esopo, K., Mellow, D., **Thomas, C.**, Uekat, H., Abraham, J., Jain, P., Jang, C., Otis, N., Riis-Vestergaard, M., Starcev, A., Orkin, K., Haushofer, J. (2017). Measuring Self-Efficacy, Executive Function, and Temporal Discounting in Kenya. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 101, 30-45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2017.10.002>

[6] **Thomas, C.**, Rathod, S., De Silva, M., Weiss, H., & Patel, V. (2016). The 12-item WHO Disability Assessment Schedule II as an outcome measure for treatment of common mental disorders. *Global Mental Health*, 3(e14). <https://doi.org/10.1017/gmh.2016.7>

Manuscripts under review and in preparation

Markus, H.†, **Thomas, C.†**, Schwalbe, M.†, Garcia, M., & Cohen, G. Inequality in coping and loss: Mostly surviving, some thriving in the COVID-19 crisis. Under review.

Thomas, C. C., Premand, P., Bossuroy, T., Soumaila, A. S., Markus, H. R., & Walton, G. M. ‘Culturally wise’ psychosocial interventions can help reduce extreme poverty. In prep.

AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

Stanford Interdisciplinary Graduate Fellowship, \$143,740 <i>Competitive university-wide, three-year fellowship awarded to 32 Stanford doctoral students pursuing innovative interdisciplinary research</i>	2019 – 2022
Horowitz Foundation for Social Policy Dissertation Prize, \$7,500 <i>International award to 25 early social science scholars advancing urgent policy research</i>	2021 – 2022
John L. Stanley Award for History and Ethics, \$1,500	
P.E.O Scholar Award, \$20,000 <i>Scholarship for academic excellence by women doctoral students in the U.S. and Canada</i>	2021 – 2022

GRANTS

The Agency Fund (lead PI), \$214,000 <i>“Aspirations interventions for the Self and for Society”</i>	2023 – 2025
Berkeley Center for Effective Global Action (co-PI), \$8,500 <i>“Enculturating Psychological and Development Sciences: A Focus on Sub-Saharan Africa”</i>	2022 – 2023
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (co-lead PI), \$684,195 <i>“Updating the American Dream”</i>	2022 – 2023
Anonymous donor (co-lead PI), \$200,400 <i>“Agenda Setting and Piloting on the Social Psychology of Barriers to Agency in Low-Income Countries”</i>	2016 – 2020

† Shared authorship

Berkeley Center for Effective Global Action (co-PI), \$10,000	2020
<i>“Poverty as a threat to adaptive adequacy: A test of an experimental intervention to enhance dignity and psychosocial, health, and economic outcomes of the poor”</i>	
Economic Security Project (lead PI), \$14,800	2020
<i>“Effects of COVID-19 and CARES Act on views of basic income policy and recipients”</i>	
Stanford King Center on Global Development (lead PI), \$3,800	2019
<i>“‘Personal Initiative’ versus ‘Interpersonal Initiative’: Testing the psychological, social, and economic effects of two models of women’s agency in Niger”</i>	
Economic Security Project (lead PI), \$10,000	2017
<i>“Investigating the Framing Effects of Basic Income Programs on Public Support, Stigma, and Behavior”</i>	

SELECTED ONGOING PROJECTS

Varieties of interdependence: A focus on Sub-Saharan Africa

Co-author, with Shinobu Kitayama, Annabella Osei-Tutu, Keiko Ishii, Tong Suo, Amelie Rossmailer

A multi-country examination of features of cognition, affect, motivation, and relationality that define cultural interdependence in West and East Africa, using both lab studies and secondary data analyses

American Voices Project

Co-author, with Hazel Markus, Geoff Cohen, Michael Schwalbe, David Grusky, Kathryn Edin

Flagship project of the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality; nationally representative, mixed methods study of the experiences of 2,700 low- and middle-income Americans between 2019 and 2021

Attitudes towards cash-based safety net policies in the U.S. across the COVID-19 pandemic

Lead author, with Hazel Markus and Greg Walton

A longitudinal study and experiment of approximately 2,400 Americans assessing changes in attitudes towards universal basic income (UBI), UBI recipients, and the role of government assistance in five survey waves between 2020 - 2021

‘Education as legacy’ intervention to advance girls’ education in Northern Nigeria

Co-author, with Ayo Dada, Greg Walton, and Carol Dweck

A social psychological experiment with 600 parents in Abuja, Nigeria, testing the effects of an ‘education as legacy’ intervention on parent investment in girls’ education

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Policy Reports

1. Bossuroy, T., Goldstein, M., Karlan, D., Kazianga, H., Parienté, W., Premand, P., **Thomas, C.**, Udry, C., Vaillant, J., Wright, K. (2021). *Pathways out of Extreme Poverty:*

Tackling psychosocial and capital constraints with a multi-faceted social protection program in Niger (Policy Research Working Paper No. 9562). World Bank, Washington D.C. [Link](#).

2. Bidadanure, J., Kline, S., Moore, C., Rainwater, B., & **Thomas, C.** (2018). *Basic Income in Cities: A guide to city experiments and pilot projects*. Prepared by the Stanford Basic Income Lab and the National League of Cities, Washington, D.C. [Link](#).

Popular Press and Commentaries

Bossuroy, T., Premand, P., & **Thomas, C.** (2023, February 16). [Can Psychosocial Interventions Make Anti-Poverty Programmes More Cost-Effective? Evidence from Niger](#). VoxDev.

Thomas, C. (2022, December). [Commentary](#). In Wein, T., Blair, M., & Mungomba, T. The Dignity Report 2022: Gathering Allies Worldwide. IDinsight.

Thomas, C., Kalkstein, D., & Walton, G. (2020, June 17). [How the Coronavirus Crisis Is Opening the Door to Universal Social Policies in the U.S.](#) *Time*.

Thomas, C., & Haushofer, J. (2015, April 21). [The Relationship Between Depression and Poverty](#). *Foreign Affairs*.

Haushofer, J. & **Thomas, C.** (2015, April 23). [Cash: a simple remedy for domestic violence?](#) International Growth Centre: Ideas for Growth Blog.

Haushofer, J., Shapiro, J., & **Thomas, C.** (2015, January 28). [Does Money Buy Happiness? A new answer to an old question](#). Society for Personality and Social Psychology: Character and Context Blog.

SELECTED MEDIA COVERAGE

Mohideen, F. (2023, March 16). [Recapping the 2023 Presidential Plenary: How Norms Change – Part 1](#). *Society for Personality and Social Psychology Newsletter*.

Anthes, E. (2020, September 10). [The great experiment](#). *The Washington Post*.

Beyer, R. (2020, July 27). [A cultural approach to development](#). *Stanford King Center on Global Development*.

Crawford, K. (2020, June 25). [‘Poverty alleviation’ and ‘needy?’ Why words can do more harm than good when offering help, Stanford study finds](#). *Stanford Report*.

Regan, S. (2020, June 4). [Social psychology PhD student shares research on universal basic income](#). *Stanford Daily News*.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS & POSTERS

Invited talks

1. The Psychology of Economic Development. Stanford Center on Democracy, Development,

- and the Rule of Law, Freeman Spogli Institute, Stanford University. 2023. Presentation.
2. Shifting Social Norms through Social Protection Programs: Deep Dive into the experience in Niger, World Bank, Social Protection and Jobs. 2022. Presentation and Panel.
 3. Aspirations, Stigma, and Related Research. Psychology and Economics of Poverty Convening 2022, University of California, Berkeley. 2022. Panel Moderator. [Link](#).
 4. Leveraging Agentic Narratives of Aid to Disrupt Cycles of Inequality. Social Psychology Area Lunch Series, University of Virginia. 2021. Presentation.
 5. Values-based Appeal of Universal Basic Income reduces Partisanship and Stereotyping. Brauer Lab, University of Wisconsin – Madison. 2021. Presentation.
 6. International Perspective in Basic Income Messaging. Basic Income Research and Action Labs Seminar. 2021. Panel.
 7. Culturally Resonant Basic Income Framings Increase Policy Support and Recipient Dignity. What’s in a Name? Practitioner’s Workshop, Stanford, CA. 2020. Presentation.
 8. The Politics of Basic Income. New Directions in Basic Income Research Workshop. University of Michigan. 2018. Panel.

Chaired symposia

Thomas, C. & Stephens, N. (2021, February). *Capitalism and Interdependence: Strange bedfellows or oil and water?* Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2021 Annual Convention.

Conference presentations

Thomas, C. C. (2023, March). *Culturally Wise Interventions Can Help Reduce Poverty in West Africa*. International Convention of Psychological Science, Brussels, Belgium. Presentation.

Thomas, C. C. (2023, February). *Culturally Wise Interventions Can Help Reduce Poverty in West Africa*. **Presidential Plenary at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2023 Annual Convention**, Atlanta, GA. [Presentation](#).

Thomas, C. C., Sambo, S. A., Premand, P., Bossuroy, T., Markus, H. R., & Walton, G. M. (2022, February). *Solidarity breeds prosperity? Comparing independent versus interdependent initiative interventions on women’s economic development in Niger*. Advances in Cultural Psychology Pre-Conference at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2022 Annual Convention, San Francisco, CA. Presentation (**Winner of Data Blitz Award**).

Thomas, C., Sambo, S. A., Premand, P., Bossuroy, T., Markus, H. R., & Walton, G. (2021, March). *Solidarity breeds prosperity? Comparing independent versus interdependent initiative interventions on women’s economic development in Niger*. CEPA Psychology & Economics of Poverty Convening 2021, University of California, Berkeley. [Presentation](#).

Thomas, C., Sambo, S. A., Premand, P., Bossuroy, T., Markus, H. R., & Walton, G. (2021, February). *Leveraging interdependence to advance economic development in West Africa*. Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2021 Annual Convention. Symposium Presentation.

Sobowale, K., Thomas, C., Forget, E., & Harper, A. (2019, May). *A Basic Income: Promises and Pitfalls for People with a Psychiatric Disability*. Panel presented at the 2019 Annual Meeting of the American Psychiatric Association, San Francisco, CA.

Thomas, C., Reinhart, E., Markus, H., & Walton, G. (2019, February). *Is Freedom the Way to a Conservative Heart? Moral Reframing of Universal Basic Income Increases Conservatives' Support and Reduces Stereotypic Thinking*. Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2019 Annual Convention, Portland, OR. Data Blitz Presentation (one of 36 selected out of 2,100 submissions).

Thomas, C. (2018, February). *The Meaning of Money Matters: Effects of Cash Transfer Framings on Recipient Agency in Kenya*. The Psychology of Inequality and Social Class Preconference at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2018 Annual Convention, Atlanta, GA. Presentation.

Thomas, C. *, Otis, N. *, Abraham, J., Walton, G., & Markus, H. (2018, February). *Culturally Relevant Construals of Cash Transfers Affect Recipient Agency: Evidence from Kenya*. Intervention Science Pre-Conference at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2018 Annual Convention, Atlanta, GA. Poster (**Winner of Poster Session**).

Thomas, C. (2017, June). *Universal Basic Income: The Meaning of Money Matters*. Presentation at the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues 2017 Conference, Albuquerque, NM. Presentation.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Guest lecturer

Stanford University

- PSYCH 75: Introduction to Cultural Psychology, Winter 2020
- PUBLPOL1: Introduction to Public Policy, Fall 2021 and Fall 2022

University of Michigan

- OS 305: Inside Organizations, Fall 2022

Graduate Teaching Assistant

1. PSYCH 251: Experimental Methods with Professor Michael Frank (stats core), Fall 2017, *Co-taught lecture on ethics*
2. PSYCH 252: Statistical Methods with Professor Tobi Gerstenberg (stats core), Winter 2021
3. PSYCH 75: Introduction to Cultural Psychology with Professor Hazel Markus, Winter 2020, *Co-taught lecture on West African Culture Cycles*
4. PSYCH 138/238: Wise Interventions with Professor Greg Walton, Winter 2019
5. PSYCH 70/SOC 2: Self & Society: Introduction to Social Psychology with Professors Alia Crum and Robb Willer, Spring 2018

AFFILIATIONS & PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Ad-hoc journal reviewer: *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, JAMA Psychiatry, Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, Economic Development and Cultural Change*

Professional service

SPSP Intervention Science Pre-Conference, Co-Organizer (2022 - present)

World Bank's Partnership for Economic Inclusion, Researcher (2022 – present)

The Agency Fund, Advisor (2021 - present)

Diversity Committee and Service, Stanford Psychology (2021 - 2022)

Volunteer for Paths to PhD, sub-committee on inclusion in curricula

Graduate Program Committee, Stanford Psychology (2020 – 2021)

Open Science Committee, Stanford Psychology (2018 – 2020)

Co-led creation of the departmental open science guide

Affiliations

Stanford SPARQ, Graduate Student Affiliate (2016-2022)

CEGA's Psychology and Economics of Poverty Initiative, member

Stanford Center on Poverty & Inequality, Graduate Research Fellow (2018-2022)

Stanford Basic Income Lab, Graduate Fellow (2018)

Co-wrote toolkit on basic income experiments, presented to California legislators

Stanford Center for Ethics in Society, Graduate Fellow (2018 – 2019)

QUANTITATIVE TRAINING

PSYCH 252: Statistical Methods for Behavioral and Social Sciences

PSYCH 254: Lab in Experimental Methods

STATS 209: Statistical Methods for Group Comparisons and Causal Inference

STATS 196A: Multilevel Modeling Using R

MS&E 226: Fundamentals of Data Science: Prediction, Inference, Causality

SOC 302: Introduction to Data Science

EDUC 430A: Experimental Research Design and Analysis

PSYCH 290: Natural Language Processing & Text-based Machine Learning in the Social Sciences

WORK EXPERIENCE

Consultant, World Bank, National Commission for Social Action, Sierra Leone	2022 – 2023
Consultant, World Bank, Sahel Adaptive Safety Net Program, Niger	2017 – 2019
Research Specialist, Department of Psychology, Princeton University Busara Center for Behavioral Economics, Nairobi, Kenya PI: Johannes Haushofer	2014 – 2016
Mental Health Counselor, Third Way Center, Denver, CO	2013
Capacity Building Fellow in Microfinance, Project Muso, Boston, MA	2012 – 2013

FIELD EXPERIENCE

Philippines (Western Visayas), project period 2022-2023

India (Bihar), project period 2022-2023

Niger, Sahel Adaptive Safety Net Program of the Government of Niger with the World Bank, project period 2017-2019

United States (Mississippi Delta, California, Midwest), American Voices Project, project period 2018-2021

Kenya (Nairobi, Western Province), Busara Center for Behavioral Economics and Princeton University, project periods 2014-2016, 2017

India (Gujarat, Maharashtra), Independent research and volunteer, 2010 summer

Togo (Lomé), Femme de Demain, 2008 summer

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Skills: R, field experiments, lab experiments, behavioral design, sociocultural analysis, partnerships, research with hard-to-reach populations, causal inference, linear mixed models, reproducible research & open science, data visualization

Languages: French (intermediate)