

Katharina Helming, Ph.D.

Psychologist | University of Warwick



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Interdisciplinary Researcher in the field of social cognition. I have extensive experience in generating research ideas, designing, and carrying out studies, analysing data and communicating the results in high-impact journals and conferences. My research focuses on the link between cooperation, communication and perspective taking.

Education

- **Ph.D. | Psychology** 09/2016
Co-direction between University of Trier, Germany and Institute
Jean Nicod, Paris, France
Grade: summa cum laude
- **Master of Arts (M.A.)¹ | Philosophy** 09/2012
University of Trier, Germany
Grade: 1.2²
- **Master of Science (M.Sc.)³ | Psychology** 09/2008
University of Trier, Germany
Grade: 1.3

Scholarships, Grants and Awards

- **Junior Research Grant | University of Trier** 2013
The Forschungsfonds allows high-achieving students to pursue their own research ideas (5000€).
- **Stipendienstiftung Rheinland-Pfalz Scholarship | University of Trier** 2012-2014
The scholarship is awarded university students with outstanding academic achievement. Besides networking opportunities and mentor programs, financial support for living expenses and study abroad is provided (approx. 38,000€).
- **Publication Prize Graduiertenzentrum | University of Trier** 2015
The publication prize is awarded to for the best scientific publication of the year (500€).
- **Nikolaus Koch Foundation Research Grant | University of Trier** 2015-2017
Awarded for outstanding research with a focus on application, co-written with Nicola Baumann (81.000€).
- **John Templeton Foundation Research Subgrant | Leipzig University** 2022
Awarded for a proposal on intellectual humility in development and across cultures, co-written with Kristina Musholt and Marie Schaefer (University of Leipzig) (30.000\$).

¹ I obtained a Magister Artium which is the equivalent to both a bachelor's (Zwischenprüfung, awarded 04/2010, Grade: 1.1) and master's degree (Magisterprüfung, awarded 09/2012) in Germany.

² Academic grades in Germany: 1 very good, 2 good, 3 satisfactory, 4 sufficient, 5 deficient, 6 insufficient as a continuous scale.

³ I obtained a Diplom in Psychology which is the equivalent to both a bachelor's (Diplomvorprüfung, awarded 10/2005 Grade: 2.0) and master's degree (Diplom, awarded 09/2008) in Germany.

Academic Positions

- Postdoctoral Research Fellow | University of Warwick⁴** 02/2020 – present
- Problem solving.** I am confronted with a wide range of tasks and problems. Those range from broader scientific questions down to study designs and data analysis.
 - Project management.** I am involved in the complete cycle of research projects. I generate new research ideas, design, and carry out studies, analyze data, and publish the outcomes. As a Ph.D. student, I learned to work independently and manage projects with >2-year time horizons. As a postdoctoral researcher I have supervised more than ten internship students and their projects.
 - Collaboration.** I thrive in collaborative environments. I am an active member of several interdisciplinary research groups and have maintained strong international ties in England, France, Germany, and Australia. In 2022 I led a three-day virtual workshop at the University of Warwick. This involved bringing together expertise from our colleagues and collaborators from Germany, the UK, and Denmark.
 - Interdisciplinary research.** I have been involved in projects at the intersection of psychology, philosophy, biology, linguistics, and cognitive sciences. As a fellow at the University of Warwick, I am managing the psychology part in a philosophy project. As a postdoctoral researcher at the Max Planck Institute, I conducted studies involving children and great apes.
 - Constant learning.** In my job, I am constantly learning and adapting to new research questions, methods, tasks, and topics. I like to be challenged and use analytical reasoning and creative problem-solving strategies to engage with complex information to gain a better understanding of how we cooperate.
 - International research experience.** I have worked in labs in Germany, France, and the UK. My international research collaborations have allowed me to contribute to research at the Humboldt University Berlin, Germany, the University of Leipzig in Germany, the German Youth Institute in Munich and become a visiting fellow at Macquarie University in Australia.
 - Communication.** Effective communication of complex information in meetings, reports, talks, and publications is essential. I have co-authored 6 peer-reviewed publications, some in the highest-impact cognitive science journals such as *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*. I also regularly present research outcomes in talks at international conferences.

Prior Academic Positions

- Postdoctoral Researcher | University of Milano-Bicocca** 03/2024 – 5/2024
- Visiting Postdoctoral Researcher | Macquarie University** 09/2023 – 02/2024
- Postdoctoral Guest Researcher | German Youth Institute, Munich, Germany** 08/2019 – 01/2020
- Postdoctoral Guest Researcher | Einstein Group, Berlin School of Mind and Brain, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany** 04/2019 – 12/2019
- Postdoctoral Guest Researcher, visiting Ph.D.⁵ | Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Department of Developmental and Comparative Psychology, Leipzig, Germany** 03/2016 – 03/2019
- Doctoral and Postdoctoral Researcher | University of Trier, Department of Psychology** 05/2015 – 04/2017

⁴ I was a Research Fellow until 06/2023 and continue to be an Honorary Fellow at the University of Warwick.

⁵ I was first a doctoral and after my defense postdoctoral researcher at the University of Trier parallel to visiting the MPI-EVA as a guest researcher.

Refereed Journal Papers

Recent publication.

Helming, K., O'Madagain, C. & Tomasello, M. (2024). Three- and 5-year-old children know their current belief might be wrong. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 246, 106001.

O'Madagain, C., **Helming**, K.A., Shupe, E., Call, J. & Tomasello, M. (2022). Great apes and human children rationally monitor their decisions. *Proc. R. Soc. B* 289: 2021268620212686.

Several species can detect when they are uncertain about what decision to make – revealed by opting out of the choice, or by seeking more information before deciding. We explored in a pair of papers if great apes and human children recognize when they need more information to make a decision because new evidence contradicts an already-formed belief. We find that great apes are sensitive to a conflict in physical evidence, while young children are more sensitive to conflicting social evidence in the form of peer disagreement. These results suggest that the distinguishing mark of human cognition is its sociality.

Relevant engagements

Ad hoc Reviewer.

Review of Philosophy and Psychology, Cognitive Development, Mind and Language, Infant and Child Development, Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, Frontiers in Psychology (section Developmental Psychology), European Journal of Developmental Psychology.

Teaching experience.

I have experience teaching small seminars as well as lectures for ~ 200 students at the University of Trier and the Humboldt University Berlin in Germany (topics including: Differential and Personality Psychology, Psychological Diagnostics, Personality Assessment, Mindreading and Cognitive Development). I have also supervised bachelor and master thesis at the University of Trier, Germany.

Research Groups.

Communicative Mind Lab at the University of Warwick (2020 - present):

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/philosophy/research/currentresearch/communicativemind/>

Research associate in Cognitive Anthropology at the Leipzig Research Centre for Early Child Development (2021 - present):

<https://www.lfe.uni-leipzig.de/en/workgroup/research-group-musholt-2/>

Einstein Fellow at the “Einstein Group: Consciousness, Emotions and Values”, Berlin School of Mind and Brain, Humboldt University Berlin (2015-2019):

<https://www.einsteinmindbrain.de/einstein-group-berlin-2015-2019/>

Social Cognition Group at the Institut Jean Nicod in Paris, France (2013-2016).

Exhibitions and Artwork

- 2005: Exhibition “Puder” (photography, poems, and video installation) in collaboration with the ASTA Kulturreferat (Student Cultural Department) at University of Trier.
- 2006: Documentary film “irrlicht72”, funded by Kulturstiftung des Bundes (Cultural Foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany) and Rosa-Luxemburg Bildungswerk Hannover (Educational Institute). The film was shown in the regular program at the independent cinema WERKSTATTKINO in Munich.
- 2007: Exhibition of graphic stories “Lifestrips”, at SPANDAU gallery in Hannover, in collaboration with Marc Seestaedt.
- 2008-2009: Ongoing series of graphic stories “Lifestrips” (reflections on ordinary life) on the subway screen broadcast BERLINER FENSTER in Berlin, in collaboration with Marc Seestaedt.
- 2009: Book premiere of graphic stories “Lifestrips” at RENATE COMICS in Berlin, in collaboration with Marc Seestaedt.

Additional information

- *English language.* Cambridge Advanced Certificate 2003 (Grade A).
- *French language.* Expert user.
- *German language.* Native.

References

- **Assoc. Prof. Richard Moore** | University of Warwick, UK
e-mail: r.t.moore@gmail.com
- **Prof. Michael Tomasello** | Duke University (former Director at the Max Planck Institute in Leipzig)
e-mail: michael.tomasello@duke.edu
- **Dr. Pierre Jacob** | Institut Jean Nicod, Paris, France
e-mail: jacobpiotr11@gmail.com