

New Content From *Current Directions in Psychological Science*

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[The Call of the Wild: How Extremism Happens](#)

Arie W. Kruglanski, Ewa Szumowska, and Catalina Kopetz

Kruglanski and colleagues propose that all cases of extremism (e.g., violent extremism, extreme humanism, workaholism, or extreme athleticism) involve the same psychological mechanism: a motivational imbalance wherein a specific need becomes so dominant that it overrides other concerns and unleashes behaviors that the other concerns used to constrain. According to this view, cases of negative and antisocial extremism, as well as cases of positive and prosocial extremism, are rooted in the imbalance of needs. The authors believe that understanding the mechanisms that promote motivational imbalance may help to prevent extremism and its possible negative consequences.

[Beyond Cause: The Development of Clockwork Cognition](#)

Frank C. Keil and Kristi L. Lockhart

From an early age, people notice and choose mechanistic explanations—how things work. Thinking about the world in terms of mechanisms provides information beyond characteristics and causes, as mechanisms typically include systematic interactions among layers of causes, and provides potential for inductive reasoning. People tend to forget details of their experiences, Keil and Lockhart write, so using mechanistic explanations as opportunities for learning and thus creating lasting abstractions that go beyond the specificity of such details can support other cognitive processes (e.g., evaluating explanation quality).

[Rethinking the Diagnosis of Mental Disorders: Data-Driven Psychological Dimensions, Not Categories, as a Framework for Mental-Health Research, Treatment, and Training](#)

Christopher C. Conway, Robert F. Krueger, and HiTOP Consortium Executive Board

Conway and colleagues discuss an alternative to the use of categories to describe mental health. The Hierarchical Taxonomy of Psychopathology (HiTOP) deconstructs diagnostic categories and replaces

them with the use of dimensions. Rethinking mental health as hierarchical dimensions, with broad and specific components, can help to explain a) why individual differences in mental health are a matter of degree, and b) how broad mental-health conditions (e.g., internalizing) can account for the tendency of more specific conditions to co-occur (e.g., depression, anxiety). The researchers review recent findings supporting the adoption of HiTOP as a framework for research, treatment, and training.

[The Psychological Reach of Culture in Animals' Lives](#)

Andrew Whiten

Recent findings suggest that cumulative buildup of culture across generations is more common in animals than researchers previously thought. Culture in diverse species appears to expand to several behaviors and throughout an animal's life. Animals not only show socially learned traditions acquired in a community but also display the cumulative cultural change over generations that has led to complex cultural phenomena observed in humans. For example, a bumblebee was trained to pull a nectar-laden flower, other bees from the hive observed this and began to adopt the technique, which subsequently spread to many other hive members. This cumulative cultural change, although not nearly as elaborate as in humans, can result in cross-generation progress.

[Prediction Biases: An Integrative Review](#)

Yang Yang, Christopher K. Hsee, and Xilin Li

Yang and colleagues propose that many prediction biases reflect a general bias—situation insensitivity. They argue that people are insensitive to situational variations that affect the variable they attempt to predict. For example, a student may be overconfident on their test performance because the situational variable “test difficulty” is low, but they may underestimate their test performance because the situational variable “test difficulty” is high. In this example, both student biases occur because the student is not sensitive to the fact that the situational variable is at an extreme in each situation. This proposed framework can explain known biases and predict new biases.

[Cognition and Emotion in Extreme Political Action: Individual Differences and Dynamic Interactions](#)

Leor Zmigrod and Amit Goldenberg

Zmigrod and Goldenberg review evidence indicating that individuals' cognition and emotions shape their willingness to support extreme political action and ideological violence. Traits such as cognitive rigidity, slow perceptual strategies, and poor executive functions appear to be linked to a higher likelihood of endorsing ideological violence. Extreme political action also appears to be linked to characteristics usually associated with high emotional reactivity and low emotional regulation, such as impulsivity and sensation seeking. The authors propose that future research on the support of ideologically motivated extremism should examine the interactions between cognitive and emotional characteristics.

[The Scams Among Us: Who Falls Prey and Why](#)

Yaniv Hanoach and Stacey Wood

Although scams are among the most common crimes, researchers do not know much about why some people are more likely to fall victim to them than others. Hanoach and Wood review what is known about

individual characteristics that may make people immune (or, conversely, more likely to fall prey) to scams. They also review what is known about the nature of scams, which can influence targets' likelihood to fall for them. Because previous research has provided mixed findings, the authors emphasize the need for more research that will aid in the development of preventive programs and reduce the number of scam victims.

[Market Cognition: How Exchange Norms Alter Social Experience](#)

Jamil Zaki, Eric Neumann, and Dean Baltiansky

Market exchange, in which people trade goods and services according to norms of price, supply, and demand, is accompanied by ideologies that influence human interactions and people's beliefs about themselves and others. Zaki and colleagues describe market cognition as the social inferences and behaviors intensified by market contexts; thus, it can alter communities and social norms. They propose that markets incentivize individuals to behave prosocially in order to be chosen as partners, increasing cooperation and trust among groups. However, markets also make individuals see others as self-interested, which can undermine communal forms of cooperation, the authors say.

[Developmental Variability and Developmental Cascades: Lessons From Motor and Language Development in Infancy](#)

Jana M. Iverson

Developmental cascades occur when an advance in a system during development has far-reaching consequences for the development of other systems. For instance, during their first year, infants begin to reach for objects, sit, and crawl; these achievements change how they experience their bodies and the objects around them, affecting their developing language systems. Iverson suggests that thinking of cascading developmental effects can reshape the conception of early-emerging developmental variabilities and delays. Iverson discusses how research with infants with elevated likelihood of developing autism spectrum disorder can inform the cascading influences of early motor development on language emergence.