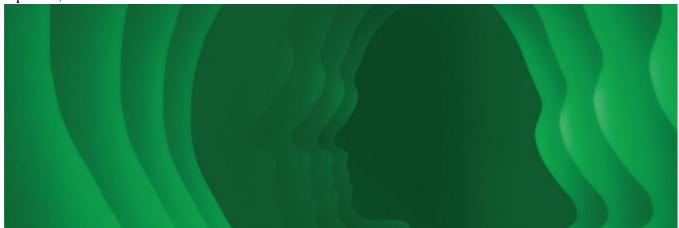# New Content From *Current Directions in Psychological Science*

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[Emerging Principles of Attention and Information Demand](#)
Jacqueline Gottlieb

In this review, Gottlieb argues that recent literature on information demand (what individuals attend to) and its implications for attention control motivate a view of attention as a mechanism that reduces uncertainty by selectively sampling sensory stimuli on the basis of expected information gain (EIG). Gottlieb discusses evidence on how individuals estimate the two quantities that determine EIG—prior uncertainty and stimulus diagnosticity (predictive accuracy)—and the neural mechanisms that compute EIG. This framework may contribute to a broader understanding of the factors

[The Role of Phenomenological Control in Experience](#)
Zoltan Dienes and Peter Lush

People have a capacity for phenomenological control (i.e., they can alter their subjective experience such that it misrepresents reality in ways consistent with their goals, despite clear contrary evidence). Using this capacity can fulfill requirements of social situations or personal needs. Hypnosis and psychological experiments, in which subjects may understand the desired experiences, may also elicit phenomenological control, as can other life situations, such as encountering a spiritual world according to one's religious beliefs.

[Disadvantaged-Group Members' Experiences of Life Transitions: The Positive Impact of Social Connectedness and Group Memberships](#)
Aarti Iyer and Jolanda Jetten

Iyer and Jetten review their research with immigrants and university students to show how individuals' social connectedness with groups can facilitate positive outcomes during life transitions. These outcomes include social integration, psychological well-being, positive beliefs about the self, and successful academic performance. The authors consider, specifically, individuals' group memberships

prior to transitions and the new identities they adopt in the new context as key determinants of successful identity change. The findings reviewed suggest the need for facilitating disadvantaged-group members' positive experiences of life transitions after they have arrived in the new context, Iyer and Jetten write.

[The Impacts of Anxiety and Motivation on Spatial Performance: Implications for Gender Differences in Mental Rotation and Navigation](#)
Stella F. Lourenco and Yaxin Liu

Gender differences in spatial tasks such as navigation and mental rotation might reflect different levels of anxiety and motivation, Lourenco and Liu suggest. They discuss how anxiety and motivation affect these tasks, highlighting the distinction between approach motivation and avoidance motivation as well as interactions between anxiety and motivation. They also describe how anxiety and motivation may affect spatial task performance by impacting attention, working memory, and response strategy. Lourenco and Liu also note that other psychological variables, such as confidence, can affect performance.

[Semantic Prosody: How Neutral Words With Collocational Positivity/Negativity Color Evaluative Judgments](#)
David J. Hauser and Norbert Schwarz

Neutral words can elicit evaluative judgments when they collocate (i.e., frequently co-occur) with positive or negative words in natural language. By activating the evaluative associations of the words in their usual company, such semantically prosodic words can color judgment in unrelated domains, Hauser and Schwarz explain. For example, people are more likely to judge "endocrination" (a fictional medical outcome) as negative when it is "caused" (a word with negative semantic prosody) rather than "produced" (a synonymous word without semantic prosody). Hauser and Schwarz review what is known about the influence of semantically prosodic words and highlight their importance for judgment and decision making.

[The PATHS to Purpose: A New Framework Toward Understanding Purpose Development](#)
Patrick L. Hill, Gabrielle N. Pfund, and Mathias Allemand

Hill and colleagues present the PATHS (Purpose As Trait, Habit, and State) model to explain how people develop a sense of purpose in life. The model explains this developmental process and how to connect one's overarching purpose in life to one's daily feelings of purposefulness. Borrowing from clinical and personality development literatures, the PATHS framework allows researchers to consider purpose as an enduring life direction (trait level), an automatized routine acting according to one's goals (habit level), and a momentary reflection or feeling that one is engaged in purposeful pursuits (state level).

[Ancestral Diversity: A Socioecological Account of Emotion Culture](#)
Paula M. Niedenthal, Ryan S. Hampton, and Michelle Marji

Conditions created by the long-term commingling of the world's people have predictable effects on the evolution of emotion cultures, Niedenthal and colleagues suggest. They propose that the ancestral

diversity of world regions accounts for significant variation in how cultures express, experience, and regulate emotion. The researchers review findings that relate countries' ancestral diversity to present-day differences in how they display emotion, clarify expressions, and use specific facial expressions, such as smiles. They also suggest that historically diverse contexts (i.e., with more heterogenous people, from different backgrounds) provide more opportunities for emotion regulation than less diverse contexts.

Institutional Inversion and "Demand-Side" Versus "Supply-Side" Views of Culture
Dov Cohen, Minjae Seo, and Robert M. Lawless

Institutional inversion occurs when collective attitudes lead to institutions that in turn lead to behaviors that are the opposite of those attitudes. Cohen and colleagues illustrate this process with the case of debt, in which antidebtor attitudes in Protestant (vs. Catholic) cultures led to institutions that fostered higher household indebtedness. They describe three factors hypothesized to make institutional inversion more likely: erroneous lay theories (particularly those that take a "demand-side" vs. a "supply-side" view of culture), moralization, and narrow construals (in terms of time, goals, and populations considered).

The Little Black Box: Contextualizing Empathy
Jennifer E. Stellar and Fred Duong

Empathy is challenging to define, and persistent disagreements about its conceptualization partially reflect researchers' tendency to simplify, remove, or ignore the context in which empathy is experienced, Stellar and Duong suggest. But context matters—for instance, individuals may experience empathy when encountering either a grieving friend or their partner expressing frustration with their behavior. To illustrate how context shapes the experience of empathy, Stellar and Duong focus on the diversity of emotional contexts that give rise to empathy. They also present a case study of context-specific empathy in response to another's pain versus sadness.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: The Underlying Role of Diminished Access to Internal States
Nira Liberman, Amit Lazarov, and Reuven Dar

Liberman and colleagues suggest that individuals with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) experience difficulty accessing their internal states, including their feelings, emotions, preferences, and motivations. Instead, they rely on proxies to inform them of these states—that is, discernible substitutes in the form of fixed rules and rituals, observable behavior, and indexes. The Seeking Proxies for Internal States (SPIS) model of OCD proposes that compulsions, obsessions, indecision, and doubt result from seeking and using such proxies. The SPIS model accounts for these OCD symptoms and sheds new light on normal processes of action control, metacognition, decision-making, and introspection.

Delusions as Epistemic Hypervigilance
Ryan McKay and Hugo Mercier

Delusions are associated with an apparently contradictory treatment of evidence, characterized by both excessive credulity (adopting unusual beliefs on minimal evidence) and excessive rigidity (holding steadfast to these beliefs in the face of strong counterevidence). To reconcile this apparent contradiction, McKay and Mercier consider the literature on epistemic vigilance, which posits that it pays to be vigilant

toward information others communicate despite there being little evolutionary advantage to scrutinizing the information our senses provide. However, individuals with delusions assign too much credibility to their own senses, producing a combination of credulity (for their own perception) and skepticism (for the testimony of others).

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