New Content From *Current Directions in Psychological Science*

July 20, 2023

**15 Years of Parental Burnout Research: Systematic Review and Agenda**
*Moiira Mikolajczak, Kaisa Aunola, Matilda Sorkkila, and Isabelle Roskam*

Parental burnout (PB), an exhaustion disorder related to parenting, is receiving increasing attention. Mikolajczak and colleagues review the accumulated findings about PB from the past 15 years. They identify four core symptoms of PB: intense parenting exhaustion, emotional distancing from one’s children, loss of parenting fulfillment, and feelings of guilt and shame. The researchers also identify factors associated with an increased risk of PB (e.g., perfectionistic or anxious personality, family disorganization, coparental disagreement) and protecting factors (e.g., high emotional competence, support from the coparent, social support). Finally, Mikolajczak and colleagues identify consequences of PB, including escape and suicidal ideations, parental neglect and violence, and high physiological manifestations of stress.

**Revising a Self-Regulation Phenotype for Depression Through Individual Differences in Macroscale Brain Organization**
*Timothy J. Strauman and Ahmad R. Hariri*

Dysfunction in self-regulation—the processes by which people initiate, maintain, and control their thoughts, behaviors, or emotions to produce a desired outcome or avoid an undesired outcome—represents a risk factor for psychopathology. Strauman and Hariri revise and expand their risk phenotype model for depression using insights from new methodologies that enable quantifying individual differences in intrinsic macroscale hierarchical brain organization. They offer a set of hypotheses as examples of how examining intrinsic macroscale brain organization can extend and enrich investigations of self-regulation and depression. For example, certain features of the macroscale brain organization might map onto perseverative goal pursuit behavior, which occurs after consistent goal pursuit failure.

**Motivated Egalitarianism**
Psychological research has, for the most part, either ignored egalitarianism (i.e., the preference for an egalitarian society, in which social groups hold similar power, status, and resources) or treated it as the absence of anti-egalitarianism, Kay and colleagues argue. However, recent empirical evidence suggests the importance and utility of treating egalitarianism as a motivating force. Because egalitarians lack the motivation to maintain or exacerbate existing inequality and engage in motivated reasoning directed at achieving greater equality, egalitarian ideology drives social cognition in meaningful ways, Kay and colleagues write. They discuss how research may uncover additional social-cognitive and behavioral consequences of egalitarian motivations.

Understanding Perceptual Decisions by Studying Development and Neurodiversity
Catherine Manning and Gaia Scerif

Humans can effectively and rapidly make decisions about perceptual inputs (e.g., moving stimuli, complex visual scenes), but this ability and how it is achieved vary widely across individuals. Manning and Scerif review complementary approaches—computational modeling, electrophysiological data, eye tracking, and longitudinal—to the study of perceptual decisions across neurotypical development and in neurodivergent individuals. These data highlight multiple parameters and temporal dynamics of how individuals become skilled adult perceptual decision makers. The diversity of parameters and temporal dynamics in the literature may help to explain this variance in how individuals make perceptual decisions.

Philosophy of Perception in the Psychologist’s Laboratory
Jorge Morales and Chaz Firestone

Scientists as well as philosophers have long studied the nature of perception. Morales and Firestone review an emerging research focus that puts long-standing philosophical questions about human perception to the empirical test. This work draws a direct line from philosophical conjectures or thought experiments about perception to key tests in the laboratory—such that the relevant experiments would not (and even could not) have proceeded as they did without the preceding philosophical discussion. The authors point to further philosophical questions that might be tested empirically.

Facing the Unknown Unknowns of Data Analysis
Eric-Jan Wagenmakers, Alexandra Sarafoglou, and Balazs Aczel

Empirical claims are inevitably associated with uncertainty, hence a major goal of data analysis is to quantify that uncertainty. However, most uncertainty may lie in what any given scientific article does not report (e.g., how the experiment was designed, how credible the authors believe their hypothesis to be). Wagenmakers and colleagues summarize recent methodological developments in this area and conclude that focusing on a single statistical analysis is myopic. They argue that social scientists may gain more insight by taking a broad view of uncertainty and by working to reduce the “unknown unknowns” that still plague reporting practices.

A Competitiveness-Based Theoretical Framework on the Psychology of Income Inequality
Nicolas Sommet and Andrew J. Elliot
Sommet and Elliot describe studies showing that income inequality, by increasing the relevance and subjective importance of economic status, fuels perceptions that others are competitive and thus our own competitiveness. They argue that this relationship explains why income inequality (a) promotes status-focused behaviors aimed at lifting oneself up and/or bringing others down, (b) harms social relations when they impede one’s economic advancement, (c) exerts opposing effects on well-being via avoidance motivation (focusing on the risk of economic failure) or approach motivation (focusing on the prospect of economic success), and (d) represents a threat to those who perceive they do not have sufficient resources to cope with the demands of competition but a challenge to those with sufficient resources.

**Five Misconceptions About Consensually Nonmonogamous Relationships**

*Amy C. Moors*

A sizeable minority of people engage, or have engaged, in some form of consensually nonmonogamous relationship (explicit mutual agreements to have multiple emotional, romantic, and/or sexual relationships). Moors draws on current scientific knowledge to address five misconceptions about consensual nonmonogamy: (a) There is a “type” of person who engages in it; (b) people engage in it to “fix” their relationship issues; and these relationships (c) are low in quality, (d) promote the spread of sexually transmitted infections, and (e) are harmful to children. Empirical evidence suggests that these misconceptions are unfounded.

**Psychological Momentum**

*Christopher J. Honey, Abhijit Mahabal, and Buddhika Bellana*

Humans usually experience thoughts on a continuous scale of seconds and minutes, largely due to recent actions, thoughts, dispositions, and emotions persisting in their minds and continually shaping their later experiences. Researchers have studied aspects of this fundamental property of human cognition—psychological momentum—under the rubrics of mindset, mood, memory, task set, and mind wandering. Honey and colleagues review these primarily independent threads of research and propose the need to understand psychological momentum from an integrated perspective as an adaptation that, although sometimes costly, carries forward thoughts and dispositions that respond to a person’s current and future environment.

**The Virtually Intelligent Negotiator: Building Trust and Maximizing Economic Gain in E-Negotiations**

*Leigh Thompson*

Virtual intelligence—the ability to communicate and navigate relationships and achieve business goals when engaging with others who are not physically present—is critical in digital and phone negotiations. Thompson reviews the advantages and disadvantages of virtual and in-person negotiations, pointing out that the latter do not always result in more trusting and mutually beneficial outcomes. The author discusses four key challenges that confront negotiators overall: relational concerns (building trust), conveyance (transmitting and receiving information), convergence (reaching a shared understanding of the situation), and achievement of instrumental goals (negotiating a favorable outcome). Thompson then uses these challenges to examine and explain virtual intelligence.
How Does Religion Deter Adolescent Risk Behavior?
James A. Shepperd and Rachel B. Forsyth

Shepperd and Forsyth present a theoretical model describing four mechanisms that contribute to religious adolescents displaying less risk behavior than nonreligious adolescents. They propose that religions affect the extent to which adolescents (a) have opportunities to engage in risk behavior, (b) find risk behavior appealing, (c) view risk behavior as morally acceptable, and (d) exert self-control over their impulses. The model identifies three features of religion that can nurture these mechanisms: influencing whether adolescents regard risk behavior as appealing and morally acceptable; relying on a god that monitors and judges behavior; and providing a community of people who can limit opportunity to engage in risk behavior.

Feedback on this article? Email apsobserver@psychologicalscience.org or login to comment. Interested in writing for us? Read our contributor guidelines.