

New Content From *Perspectives on Psychological Science*

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[A Behavioral Science Framework for Understanding College Campus Sexual Assault](#)

Ana P. Gantman and Elizabeth Levy Paluck

Gantman and Levy Paluck introduce a behavioral-science approach to understanding and potentially reducing sexual assault on college campuses. This approach posits that people commit assault when situational aspects such as geographical configurations, local cues, and situation-based power either activate or suppress certain mental processes (person perception, social norms, moral reasoning, and goals) that make them more or less likely to commit sexual assault. This framework emphasizes the power of the situation and might inform effective interventions to reduce sexual assault on college campuses.

[Adaptive Empathy: A Model for Learning Empathic Responses in Response to Feedback](#)

Simone G. Shamay-Tsoory and Uri Hertz

How best to study empathy? Empathy occurs in social interactions, and thus studies examining it should include empathizers as well as empathy targets and evaluate how feedback affects empathic responses, Shamay-Tsoory and Hertz propose. On the basis of this idea, the authors created a framework for understanding how people learn empathy from feedback and in which the concept of adaptive empathy—the ability to adapt one’s empathic responses—becomes central. Shamay-Tsoory and Hertz suggest that adaptive empathy is shaped by interactions between the neural circuits associated with valuation, shared distress, observation execution, and mentalizing.

[The Limitations of Social Science as the Arbiter of Blame: An Argument for Abandoning Retribution](#)

Alexa M. Tullett

Tullett proposes that the criminal-justice system should abandon its retributive goals—punishing someone who breaks the law proportionally to the crime—and pursue more reparative forms of justice. The current retributive system attempts to determine perpetrators’ culpability and blameworthiness by weighing

factors such as their ability to think rationally, their freedom from coercion, and whether their actions reflect their character. The issue, Tullett writes, is that these determinations are informed by social-scientific research that may not be replicable or generalizable or have enough inferential strength. These limitations make blameworthiness ambiguous and increase the risk of finding the innocent guilty.

[A Strange Kind of Wave: Response to Payne, Vuletich, and Lundberg \(2022\)](#)

Paul Connor

In their bias-of-crowds model, Payne and colleagues (2017) suggested that implicit bias can be understood as a feature of situations. However, in a 2020 article, Connor and Evers argued that implicit bias is best understood as a feature of individuals, whose measurement includes errors. In a reply, Payne and colleagues (2022) argued that the 2020 critique agreed that implicit bias varies across persons and situations and that the disagreement, if any, appeared to be about what it means to be an “individual construct” or a “feature of situations.” In this response, Connor restates his and Evers’ disagreements, including their concerns with the novelty of Payne et al.’s model and how it does not appear to take into account all that researchers already know about implicit bias.

[Mental Health During the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Review and Recommendations for Moving Forward](#)

Lara B. Akin et al.

Akin and colleagues summarize high-quality studies (published as recently as early 2021) examining the mental-health consequences of living through the COVID-19 pandemic. This review suggests that anxiety, depression, and distress increased during the onset of the pandemic, whereas life satisfaction, loneliness, and suicide rates remained stable. Akin and colleagues make short-term and ongoing recommendations to bolster mental health during a pandemic and beyond. Their most urgent recommendation: Support immediate, large-scale research into the nature, treatment, and long-term consequences of COVID-19 on mental health. Increased psychological insight can help inform decision-making and policy, the authors suggest.

[Balancing the Freedom–Security Trade-Off During Crises and Disasters](#)

Nathan N. Cheek, Elena Reutskaja, and Barry Schwartz

During crises and disasters, such as hurricanes, terrorist threats, or pandemics, policymakers sometimes increase security at the cost of freedom. Psychological science, however, has shown that this restriction of freedom may have strong negative consequences for behavior and health. Cheek and colleagues suggest that psychology can inform policy both by elucidating some negative consequences of lost freedom (e.g., depression or behavioral reactance) and by revealing strategies to address them. They propose that careful consideration of the psychology of freedom can help policymakers develop policies that most effectively promote public health, safety, and well-being when crises and disasters strike.

[Toward a Psychology of Consent](#)

Vanessa K. Bohns

Bohns argues that psychologists should embrace consent—in particular, the subjective experience of consent—as a core topic of study. Although domain-specific research on consent—most commonly,

informed consent and sexual consent—is regularly published in specialty journals (e.g., methods and sex-research journals), consent has been largely ignored as a psychological phenomenon, Bohns says. This omission is particularly striking given that psychologists have paid broad attention to related constructs, such as compliance, obedience, persuasion, free will, and autonomy, and that scholars in other fields, such as law and philosophy, have paid attention to the topic of consent.

[Outside the “Cultural Binary”: Understanding Why Latin American Collectivist Societies Foster Independent Selves](#)

Kuba Kryś, Vivian L. Vignoles, Igor de Almeida, and Yukiko Uchida

Kryś and colleagues argue for the revision of views linking collectivist values with interdependent self-construal (i.e., people construe themselves in relation to others by fitting in and seeking harmonious interdependence). The researchers draw on the example of Latin American societies that emphasize collectivist values as strongly as East Asian societies but also accentuate forms of independent self-construal as strongly as Western societies. Kryś and colleagues explain this apparent anomalous evidence by differences in modes of subsistence, colonial histories, cultural heterogeneity, religious heritage, and societal organization. Their conclusions suggest the need to pay more attention to global cultures beyond “the West” and East Asia.

[Significance-Quest Theory](#)

Arie W. Kruglanski et al.

The significance-quest theory (SQT), proposed by Kruglanski and colleagues, assumes that the quest for significance (the need to have social worth) is universal, whereas the means of satisfying it depend on the sociocultural context in which one’s values are embedded. The quest for significance is activated by significance loss and/or the opportunity for significance gain. It motivates behavior that aims to affirm, realize, and/or show commitment to an important value. The SQT, which is consistent with prior research and supported by novel studies in multiple laboratory and field settings, offers guidance for further studying this essential human motivation.