New Research From Psychological Science

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Read about the latest research published in *Psychological Science*:

The Political Self: How Identity Aligns Preferences With Epistemic Needs
Christopher M. Federico and Pierce D. Ekstrom

Previous research has suggested that people motivated to quickly get answers and make decisions (i.e., those with high need for closure) tend to affiliate with the political right. However, people who prefer to keep their options open (i.e., those with low need for closure) tend to affiliate with the political left. But how does the extent to which one's political preferences are central to one's self-concept affect these findings? The authors analyzed data from a U.S. representative survey and found that need for closure was related to political ideology only in people who saw their political beliefs as central to their self-concept. In those people, high need for closure was related to conservative political identity and issue attitudes, and low need for closure was related to liberal political identity and issue attitudes. Political identity accounted for the relation between need for closure and issue attitudes. These results show that the relationship between personality and political preferences is complex, and opposing political preferences do not always mean personality differences.

Corepresentation During Joint Action in Marmoset Monkeys (*Callithrix jacchus*)
Fabia M. Miss and Judith M. Burkart

Humans represent their own actions and their partner's actions while engaging in cooperative behavior, but do other cooperative primate species show such corepresentation? The researchers tested 10 marmosets using an auditory version of the Simon task, which requires participants to make either left-hand or right-hand responses to auditory stimuli. Marmosets performed the task individually and with a partner. Similar to humans, marmosets performed better when the stimulus and the required response were compatible (i.e., they occurred on the same side), a "Simon effect" that was even stronger when the task was performed with a partner. The effect did not occur in the control conditions when one response was not available or when the partner was present but could not collaborate. Results showed that marmosets engaged in mutual gaze before action and looked at their partner more when the partner was collaborating. These results indicate that action corepresentation is not unique to humans and suggest that it does not depend on having a theory of mind.

Evidence of Serial Processing in Visual Word Recognition
Alex L. White, John Palmer, and Geoffrey M. Boynton

Vision begins with the ability to process several elements from the visual field at the same time, in parallel. But what are the limits of this parallel processing? The authors tested whether a serial bottleneck that would allow the visual system to process only one item at a time would constrain visual recognition. They asked participants to fixate on the center of a screen while masked pairs of words were

rapidly presented. Participants had to detect target words that belonged to a semantic category or were colored red on one side of the pair (single-task condition) or on both sides (dual-task condition). Results showed that, in the dual-task condition, detection of semantic target words was more impaired than detection of colored words. These results show that the visual system can handle many elements at the same time if only physical features are being processed. When semantic meaning is being processed, a serial bottleneck limits parallel processing. Thus, parallel visual processing is limited by the nature of the task, and semantic recognition requires attention.

Asymmetric Mixtures: Common Conceptual Priorities for Social and Chemical Kinds
Alexander Noyes and Frank C. Keil

People tend to categorize biracial individuals as belonging to the minority category; for example, Black-White biracial individuals are seen as Black instead of White. This phenomenon is called *hypodescent*. Hypodescent might be caused by a focus of attention on distinctive and dangerous factors that affect general conceptual representations and that are extendable to nonsocial domains. In three experiments, the authors tested this idea by asking participants to categorize mixtures of two liquids. The liquids varied in distinctiveness and dangerousness (water, cranberry juice, apple juice, saline, vodka, Vicodin, urine, and cyanide). The results showed that participants asymmetrically categorized the mixtures as belonging to the distinctive-dangerous category, even when that category's component was less than 50% of the mixture. In another study, participants classified biracial individuals, including categories not usually studied, such as South Asian or Aboriginal Australian. People with Arab and Black ancestry were classified as more Arab and Black, respectively, regardless of their other racial component. Moreover, ratings of danger-potency and distinctiveness predicted liquid and racial hypodescent. These results support the idea that general cognitive factors, rather than social-cognitive factors, create hypodescent.