New Research in *Psychological Science*

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[Beyond Western, Educated, Industrial, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) Psychology: Measuring and Mapping Scales of Cultural and Psychological Distance](#)
Michael Muthukrishna, Adrian V. Bell, Joseph Henrich, et al.

Psychological science has predominantly used data from the United States and other societies characterized as Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD). But research comparing WEIRD and non-WEIRD societies has become more common, creating the need for a tool that helps to design and plan comparative studies. Muthukrishna and colleagues introduce a method for measuring the psychological and cultural distance between societies. They focus on the United States and China (a common cultural comparison) and provide the code and an online application to compare any two countries.

[Truth, Lies, and Gossip](#)
Kim Peters and Miguel A. Fonseca

Participants played a trust game in which players (investors) decided how many tokens to invest in other players (agents). To elicit gossip, Peters and Fonseca asked these investors to send a message to future investors stating how many tokens they had invested and received. Investors lied on a minority of their messages but were twice as likely to lie when they were competing against other investors for a bonus. Lying did not affect the levels of trust and trustworthiness (i.e., how many tokens investors gave to agents and how many tokens agents returned). Moreover, investors appeared to use the lies to help future investors differentiate among agents and reciprocate the agents' behavior, indicating that some lies might not make gossip harmful.

[Learning Novel Skills From Iconic Gestures: A Developmental and Evolutionary Perspective](#)
Manuel Bohn, Clara Kordt, Maren Braun, Josep Call, and Michael Tomasello

Learning from iconic gestures—bodily movements that have no physical effect on objects but represent actions that would have an effect (e.g., mimicking opening a box)—might be a uniquely human form of learning. Bohn and colleagues investigated whether 2- and 3-year-old children and great apes learned to interact with a novel apparatus (e.g., a box that releases marbles when two handles are moved simultaneously in opposite directions) by copying iconic gestures. Results showed that children, but not apes, appeared to learn from iconic gestures, with older children doing so to a larger extent. Thus, the ability to copy gestures appears to be established in humans by at least 3 years of age.

[On the Limited Generality of Air Pollution and Anxiety as Causal Determinants of Unethical Behavior: Commentary on Lu, Lee, Gino, and Galinsky (2018)](#)
Daniel W. Heck, Isabel Thielmann, Sina A. Klein, and Benjamin E. Hilbig

Lu and colleagues (2018) proposed that air pollution increased anxiety, which led to dishonesty, and showed that U.S. cities that were more polluted also had higher crime rates. Heck and colleagues question Lu and colleagues' theory, arguing that it is incompatible with other evidence of unethical behavior. They suggest that Lu and colleagues provided limited evidence that anxiety causes unethical behavior and that the association between crime and pollution omitted seasonal crime rates and was present only for less severe offenses. The authors present two studies to illustrate their criticism.

[Air Pollution, State Anxiety, and Unethical Behavior: A Meta-Analytic Review](#)
Jackson G. Lu, Julia J. Lee, Francesca Gino, and Adam D. Galinsky

In this reply to Heck and colleagues (2020), Lu and colleagues provide two meta-analyses supporting their 2018 study and theory. The first meta-analysis indicates that more air pollution is linked to more unethical behavior, and the second meta-analysis indicates that anxiety appears to cause increases in unethical behavior or dishonesty. Nevertheless, the researchers warn that their meta-analyses do not necessarily indicate that the effects can be generalized to all air pollutants and all geographical regions.

[What Is the Test-Retest Reliability of Common Task-Functional MRI Measures? New Empirical Evidence and a Meta-Analysis](#)
Maxwell L. Elliott, Annchen R. Knodt, David Ireland, et al.

The reliability of measuring brain activity using task functional MRI (fMRI) for predicting disease risk and outcomes appears to be low. Elliott and colleagues present a meta-analysis of prior research and an analysis of test-retest reliability of brain activity in certain regions across 11 common fMRI tasks. The authors found that reliability across studies was low and test-retest studies did not reliably show activity in the same areas of interest for the same tasks. These findings suggest that current task-fMRI measures are not suitable for predicting clinical outcomes or studying individual differences.