New Research in *Psychological Science*

August 19, 2020

[Concerns About Automation and Negative Sentiment Toward Immigration](#)
Monica Gamez-Djokic and Adam Waytz

The rise of sophisticated technology that can automate certain tasks not only threatens jobs but also appears to have social and psychological consequences, such as increasing negative attitudes toward immigration. In 12 studies, Gamez-Djokic and Waytz found that, both in the United States and in Europe, people who perceive automation as a greater threat to employment also tend to hold negative perceptions about immigrants. Automation concerns are also linked to support for restrictive immigration policies and, in the context of layoffs, an increase in discrimination against immigrants.

[Aging Predicts Decline in Explicit and Implicit Memory: A Life-Span Study](#)
Emma V. Ward, Christopher J. Berry, David R. Shanks, Petter L. Moller, and Enida Czsiser

Aging can negatively affect explicit and implicit memory, this study suggests. Participants between the ages of 12 and 82 years saw a succession of rapidly presented overlapping line-drawings of everyday objects colored in magenta or cyan. They were told to pay attention to the object into one color and to ignore the object in the other color. In the test, participants saw objects from both groups mixed with unseen objects. All objects were drawn in black and covered by a visual mask that made their identification difficult. Participants were asked to identify whether they had seen each object before and what color it had been. Age predicted decline in both implicit memory (priming—reaction times until identification) and explicit memory (recognition and color identification) for previously attended objects.

[Face Pareidolia Recruits Mechanisms for Detecting Human Social Attention](#)
Colin J. Palmer and Colin W. G. Clifford

Recognizing faces in everyday objects—a phenomenon known as face pareidolia—appears to occur when visual mechanisms that typically process human faces process an object, this research suggests. Participants viewed several "pareidolia faces" that appear to have a specific direction of attention as well as human faces with different gaze directions. When indicating whether the human face was making eye contact with them, participants shifted their judgment in direction of the gaze of the pareidolia images (e.g., participants who saw left-gazing pareidolia images classified slight left gazes as eye contact). This effect indicates processing the pareidolia images and the faces relied on overlapping mechanisms.

Polluted Psyche: Is the Effect of Air Pollution on Unethical Behavior More Physiological or Psychological?

Shiyang Gong, Jackson G. Lu, John M. Schaubroeck, et al.

In this commentary, Gong and colleagues extend Lu et al.'s (2018) findings that air pollution predicts unethical behavior. In two studies, the researchers show that people tend to feel more anxious and thus behave more unethically when they psychologically experience (i.e., have the perception of experiencing) more air pollution (e.g., when cloudiness makes pollution appear more severe; when health alerts deem pollution levels unhealthy). This effect indicates that the association between air pollution and unethical behavior may be more driven by perceived air-pollution levels than by the actual physiological effects of air pollution.

Reanalysis Suggests Evidence for Motor Simulation in Naming Tools Is Limited: A Commentary on Witt, Kemmerer, Linkenauger, and Culham (2010)

Jessica K. Witt, David Kemmerer, Sally A. Linkenauger, and Jody C. Culham

Witt and colleagues reanalyze the data from their 2010 study, in which they had reported that participants were faster and more accurate at naming tools with handles oriented toward their unoccupied hand than toward their hand squeezing a ball, indicating that motor simulation helps to name tools. After reported failures to replicate these findings, Witt and colleagues opted for using multiverse and Bayesian analysis to self-correct their findings. This reanalysis indicated an absence of differences in the data, suggesting that motor simulation may not play a supportive role in naming tools.

The Latent Genetic Structure of Impulsivity and Its Relation to Internalizing Psychopathology

Daniel E. Gustavson, Naomi P. Friedman, Pierre Fontanillas, et al.

Impulsivity can be broken down into different categories, such as negative and positive urgency, lack of premeditation, lack of perseverance, and sensation seeking. The urgency categories are the most related to internalizing psychopathology (e.g., depression, anxiety), this research suggests. Gustavson and colleagues used data from published genome-wide association studies to assess the genetic structure of impulsivity and its relation to internalizing psychopathology. Evidence also indicated that delay discounting (a tendency to devalue future events) may be genetically separable from the other impulsivity factors.

[On Intersectionality: How Complex Patterns of Discrimination Can Emerge From Simple Stereotypes](#)
Neil Hester, Keith Payne, Jazmin Brown-Iannuzzi, and Kurt Gray

Black men are disproportionately stopped by police to a degree that cannot be explained by the simple or additive effects of being Black and male. What explains this pattern of discrimination? In a set of simulations, Hester and colleagues found that combining simple stereotypes with threshold models of behavior (e.g., "if someone's threat level seems higher than X, stop that person") can explain the patterns of complex discrimination found in gender-by-race and gender-by-age discrimination in police stops. These simulations suggest that some complex behaviors can arise from relatively simple cognitions.