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MASTHEAD

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Writers,

To our new readers, welcome to Psyched! Magazine. To our old readers, please join us in congratulating and thanking 2020-2021 Masthead for their hard work and dedication to the publication. Now, as the new Masthead, we'd like to present an issue that this previous masthead worked on, which was never published.

This issue focuses on the psychological effects of this past year's major current events. With topics ranging from Covid-19 and its long-term psychological effects, the past presidential election, or racial bias in healthcare, each article represents the mission of Psyched! Magazine: to educate the community and further engagement and interest in the field of psychology. We hope you all enjoy this issue as much as we did, and once again, thank you to the 2020-2021 Masthead for making it possible.

Thank you to all the writers who have contributed to our publication in the past years, and we are always looking for new writers who are passionate about psychology to bring in new perspectives. As we step into our new roles, we are excited to announce that we are currently working on the next issue of Psyched! Magazine, this time with a theme of mental health awareness. If you are looking to write, edit, do layout, draw graphics, or simply learn more about psychology, feel free to reach out. Our mission is to continue working with this community to foster growth and facilitate learning in the wonderful field of psychology, and we hope that you'll join us in this journey!

Love,

Lisa, Livia, Henrik, and Tommy

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HOW TO PROCESS THE NEWS

By Joy An '23

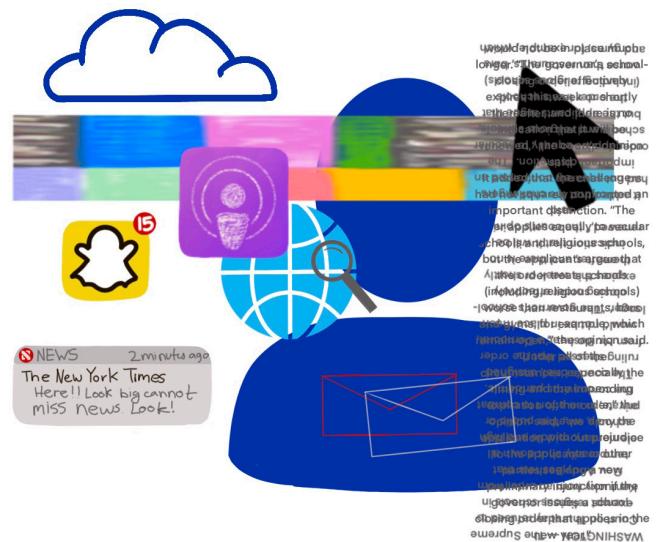
CNN. NBC. Fox News. NPR. The New York Times. These days, there's an unlimited amount of places to receive news, all accessible through a quick Google search. American entrepreneur Mitchell Kapur once compared getting information off of the internet to trying to drink water from a fire hydrant. This overwhelming phenomenon is called information overload, where an individual feels confused and indecisive after receiving too much information at a fast pace.

The term information overload was coined in 1964 by Bertram Gross, a Professor of Political Science at Hunter College. Gross states in his book *The Managing of Organizations*: "information overload occurs when the amount of input to a system exceeds its processing capacity. Decision makers have fairly limited cognitive processing capacity. Consequently, when information overload occurs, it is likely that a reduction in decision quality will occur."¹

While the idea of information overload has existed for a while, it has become increasingly prevalent in today's digital world. Digitizing content has not only made it easier to find information, but also easier to publish content. Now that production cost is an artifact of the past, anyone can publish their opinion online, leading to an overflow of information across the internet. However, our ability to process information is limited. The stress of not being able to intake information as fast as it is provided demoralizes us and depletes our energy. This ends up influencing not only our ability to make decisions, but also our overall mood and productivity, and we end up not thinking as effectively about the information we receive.²

So what can we do to prevent ourselves from experiencing information overload? Perhaps the most important thing we can do to protect ourselves is to shift our mindsets. It's natural to think that we must be aware of every new event in the world, but this point

of view quickly tires us out. We should accept the truth that it is impossible to know everything. We won't ever be able to process all the information that comes our way, and that's okay. Of course, a careful balance needs to be struck between not burning ourselves out and educating ourselves. When reading the news, be sure to pay attention to your own mindset and mental health. If overwhelmed, take a break from the news and spend some time by yourself. Keeping up to date with the news is important, but you can only process the implications of current events effectively when avoiding information overload.



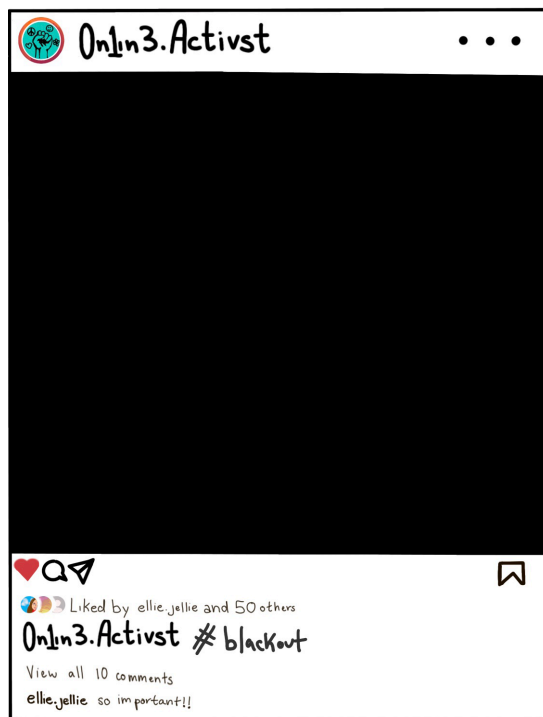
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ONLINE ACTIVISM: POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE?

By Valerie Guadian '23

With every generation comes a set of unprecedented privileges. For those born in the 21st century, the Internet, social media, and the idea of being “online,” earn said distinction. For those in Generation Z, dispersing information with a click of a button to potentially hundreds of thousands of people is a normal part of life. Many believe this information superhighway has become a valuable asset to the world of online activism. But is this really true?



Online activism would be nothing without the tools that power it. Through platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and even TikTok, spreading a message of change through digital media is simple. According to a survey by The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, seventy five percent of teens have at least one active social media account.¹ The captive young audiences that social media fosters are capable of furthering great movements such

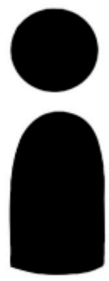
as the #MeToo movement, which exposed the sexual assault prevalent in many industries, especially entertainment. However, online activism isn't without its faults.

One of online activism's greatest issues is the presence of deep echo chambers, or environments where opinions are unified and never refuted. This is due to the algorithms created by the social media platforms we tend to use. To keep you engaged, platforms include exploratory content pages, such as Instagram's "Explore Page" or TikTok's "For You Page," and fill them with content they predict you'll interact with. As a result, politically active users only view content related to their respective viewpoint, creating an environment of hostility that opens the door to fraudulent headlines. This environment is the source of several ethical quandaries: who is responsible to halt fake news to prevent misinformation? Is it the responsibility of the platform's parent company or is it the responsibility of the users to monitor their own information intake?

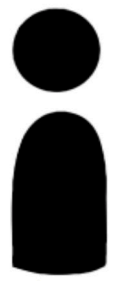
In the end, online activism is both positive and negative. It has contributed to pressing issues such as social justice, climate change, government policies, non-profit organizations and much more. Still, we must not turn a blind eye to the downfalls of online activism, and we must focus on improving our current system of gathering and sharing information.

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SOCIAL DISTANCING



By Lex Njomin '23

Social distancing, while seemingly attractive at first, quickly loses its novelty. The “endless” hours to binge Netflix become limited once all the content we enjoy has been consumed. Lockdowns have been shown to damage the psyche of individuals in a plethora of ways, which should come as no surprise due to the social nature of humans. Increased loneliness, depression, and even post traumatic stress are all possible side effects of just a 10 day quarantine.¹ However, these problems aren’t guaranteed developments and are simply made more likely to happen by the scenarios that social distancing promotes. For example, people who get easily distressed by news only have more opportunities to fuel that negative behaviour in quarantine. It should really be as simple as this: don’t do the things that stress you out. Yet, this suggestion isn’t really that easy, because in the same way that you can’t tell a person suffering from depression to just “be happy”, brains that are overburdened or lethargic can’t just “be normal”.

Although the effects of COVID quarantine have not been recorded for any extended period of time, a similar virus provides telling data. After the 2003 SARS outbreak, data and statistics were recorded on the long term impacts of quarantine across several groups. Three years after the SARS outbreak, 77% of a group of over 540 nurses experienced mild depressive symptoms as a result of quarantining.² These results are still serious even for individuals without a direct connection to the virus, eg. health-care or essential workers. A study found

that after the SARS outbreak, “mean post-traumatic stress scores were four times higher in children who had been quarantined than in those who were not quarantined.”² In addition to long term effects on mental health, quarantining resulted in behavioral changes, too, with over a fifth of participants in a study reporting that they avoided all public spaces in the weeks following quarantine.² These three studies highlight serious possibilities that may come of quarantining, ranging from behavioral changes to post traumatic stress. We can easily see that social isolation deprives brains of stability and heavily influences mental health.

It’s obvious that social distancing has heavy drawbacks, but sometimes that’s the only preventative measure available. So what solutions are there? Take care of yourself. It’s often hard to focus on improving mental health right off the bat, so improving physical wellbeing is often a first step. These two aspects of our life are connected; bolstering one affects the other. It’s why pro bodybuilders are so good at motivating themselves to work out, inspiring other people, and achieving their goals. The mental acuity that is built when working out for long hours everyday translates into everyday benefits; sticking to a workout schedule easily escalates to following a work and lifestyle schedule. So to improve mental health in a socially distanced scenario, take care of your physical well being first. This doesn’t necessarily mean working out. If you use one

space to eat, sleep, and study, and it becomes one conglomerate mess, everything loses efficiency. Eating and entertainment bleed into studying time, studying time bleeds into sleeping time, and then the body as a whole is out of whack. Don’t give in to the id, the instant gratification component of your personality, because reinforcing physical health translates into improving mental health, too.

The health of our communities matter. Taking preventative measures should be our greatest concert, but these measures can personally impact us. Mental health, the often overlooked aspect of our lives, suffers the most when we are physically separated from each other. Yet, in some cases, these issues can be prevented by simply caring about physical health.

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COVID-19: WILL FUTURE GENERATIONS FEEL ITS EFFECTS?

By Lara Stone '22

Catastrophic events such as pandemics, wars, and natural disasters have undeniably negative effects on those subjected to their terrors. In 1998, an ice storm knocked out power across Ontario and Quebec for six weeks, leaving changes to everyday life and society in its wake.¹ These negative effects extended further than had been expected. The significant stress on women who were pregnant during these times often had damaging effects on the mental health of their children. Scientists have been able to observe a correlation between events such as this ice storm and an enlarged amygdala, the part of the brain that produces the response to a threat, in offspring ten years later.¹ Enlarged amygdalas are often linked to behavioral disorders and aggressive tendencies. Other effects of disaster-related prenatal maternal stress include variances in intelligence and language abilities.^{2,3} Prenatal maternal stress, in general, can drastically affect a developing fetus, altering their chances of being diagnosed with depression, anxiety, or aggressive tendencies later on in life.¹

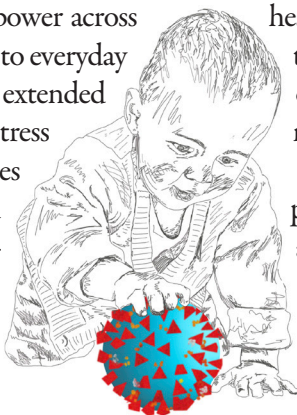
The coronavirus pandemic is yet another one of these catastrophes, and many scientists are intrigued by how the current state of the world will manifest in the offspring of the future. One scientist in particular, Caroline Lebel, is conducting a study about these elevated stressors in pregnant mothers, and the potential long term effects of COVID-19 on their offspring.⁴

Lebel's study surveyed 2,000 women who were pregnant during the pandemic and found both significant and concerning results: 37% of these women relayed symptoms of depression, and 57% relayed symptoms of anxiety.⁴ The most common stressors during this time include job loss, loneliness, changes in parental care, and health risks.⁴ Mental health concerns play a role in 10-25% of typical pregnancies, and these added COVID-related stressors will negatively affect the fetuses.⁴

In addition to virus-specific stressors and consequences, there are added socioeconomic and medical effects of the pandemic. Children who are born during this time may not have access to necessary healthcare services, especially in families who are facing income inequality or are lacking necessary resources. Children who were previously at risk of facing a lack of resources are now even more vulnerable to these struggles which could lead to medical complications and malnutrition.¹ Aspects of medical care for pregnant women have also changed drastically during this time. For example, in the Netherlands,

partners were forbidden to be present during labor or other pregnancy-related doctors' visits, which contributed to the hesitancy of women to attend the necessary prenatal appointments, and led to an increased number of home births.⁵ Skipping these crucial appointments can be dangerous for the mother and child.

Minimizing the stress of mothers during this unpredictable time is crucial for the health of the fetus and parent. Earlier results from Lebel's study have suggested some things to help mothers to cope with the increased stress. Increased physical activity, social support, and maintaining relationships, as well as accepting and asking for help from others, are all ways that mothers can work through this difficult period.⁴ Minimizing stressors and attending medical appointments regardless of circumstances are the best ways of maintaining the health of fetuses to eliminate long term effects of trauma.



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PRISON ISN'T THE SOLUTION FOR MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

By Lisa Ji '22

It was reported in 2005 that 705,600 inmates in state prisons, 78,800 inmates in federal prisons, and 479,900 inmates in local jails suffered from mental health issues. This accounts for over half of all inmates in the U.S. correctional system. Adding to this high proportion of psychiatric disorders in prison, about half of the inmates reported symptoms of mania while a third reported symptoms of major depressive disorder or other psychotic disorders.¹

The prevalence of mental health conditions in prison can be attributed to several factors. While many inmates already exhibit some symptoms before admission or are predisposed to psychological disorder due to childhood abuse or trauma, many develop new conditions due to their imprisonment. In some countries — due to a lack of mental health facilities and misconceptions about mental disorders — patients afflicted with severe mental disorders are inappropriately locked up in prisons.² For example, instead of receiving attention from rehabilitation services, a patient with substance abuse disorder could be sentenced to prison for selling illegal drugs, leaving their disorder untreated. In addition, family background plays an essential role in influencing the inmate's mental condition. About 18% of state prisoners who had a mental health problem reported living in a foster home, agency, or institution while growing up; other contributing factors include having a family member incarcerated or subjected to substance abuse, being homeless before admission, and experiencing physical or sexual abuse before admission.¹ These inmates had no choice but to endure the negative influence from where they grew up, thus developing underlying mental traumas that marginalized them and incited criminal behaviors.

Prison itself may also cause inmates to develop a mental illness. Unregulated punishment such as solitary confinement commonly used for disciplinary problems, rule violations, and physical assaults can manifest isolating feelings. Various forms of violence, crowded living quarters, lack of privacy, and the increased risk of victimization within the institution negatively af-

fect inmates' mental health conditions and lead to a higher risk of suicide.³ Unfortunately, prisons lack proper mental health care services. Qualified professional mental health workers are extremely limited; it's extremely costly to administer diagnostic tests, psychiatric therapy, and off-site treatment for the potential patient in prison.³ Consequently, the mental health

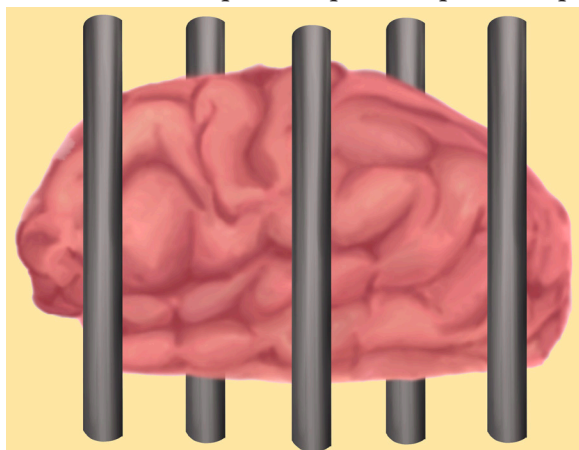
conditions of many inmates who do not receive proper treatment could deteriorate, leading to future delinquency or self-harming behavior.

Prevention, detection, and treatment for mental health disorders in prison thus becomes an important cause in the criminal health system. Various solutions are proposed to improve these detrimental flaws. First of all, legislation should reinforce the transfer of patients with

mental health disorders to psychiatric facilities from prison.² The budgets of correctional facilities should be adjusted for better access to mental health care and medications.² Lastly, there should be proper training for staff about mental health. This knowledge can reduce stigmas and discrimination and prevent possible self-harming actions from going unnoticed.

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HEATED CONVERSATIONS WITH LOVED ONES: IS IT NECESSARY TO FIGHT?

By Summer Xu '23

For many, it is challenging to engage in meaningful and positive political conversations with the people you love. Nowadays, with political standpoint serving as a large aspect of self-identity and the U.S becoming more politically polarized than ever, it has become even more difficult to start up political conversations, especially with those who have opposing views. From a psychological point of view, it is natural to show some form of hostility when engaging in political conversations with people you love. However, there are ways you can improve the quality of a meaningful dialogue with your loved ones, even if they have opposing political standpoints.

There are reasons behind why political conversations can get so heated. Even seemingly informal discussions of politics can soon escalate into something so hurtful that it can impact life-long relationships. This is because we tend to see our political ideology as one of our personal identities. In other words, when our political ideas are challenged, our brains interpret it as a form of attack on our personal identities, according to Kristi Phillips, a licensed psychologist in Minnesota.¹ Another common misunderstanding is that politics are often tied with a political figure that holds these opinions. Therefore, it is likely for us to disagree with a specific political policy or issue just because it is associated with a political figure we dislike, which leads to circular arguments that never end.¹

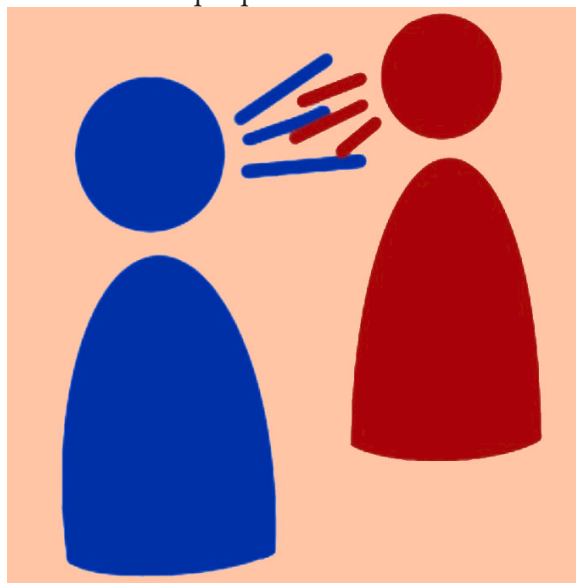
Many believe that people should avoid serious arguments between friends and families when discussing political issues. However, research shows that when you are debating political issues with your friends, changing up the way you present your opinion can

make it less stressful, allowing for discourse that can be beneficial for the relationship. According to *Psychology Today*, talking about politics with friends, even if you're on different sides of the political spectrum, can actually have a beneficial impact if certain steps are taken.² Even simply stating and reassuring the physical safety of everyone in the group can make conversations more effective. In fact, studies show that when people feel secure they are more likely to be open minded.²

Despite the barriers of starting a political discussion with loved ones, these conversations are undeniably necessary. However, we must remember that making each other feel safe is equally important as expressing our own political views. In this way, we will be able to hold productive and peaceful conversations with people we love.

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RACIAL BIAS IN HEALTHCARE

By Amanda Benneh '24

Racial disparities and bias play a huge role in the American healthcare system and pharmaceutical industry. Evidence shows that minorities have been negatively affected in a variety of instances pertaining to the access of healthcare. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) report on unequal treatment states, “Racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare exist and, because they are associated with worse outcomes in many cases, are unacceptable.”¹ From finding immediate medical help to receiving medicine, racial bias effects every step of a patient’s process. In many cases this bias is unintentional, existing simply because of the way it is embedded in the healthcare system itself. Implicit bias refers to the attitudes and stereotypes that affect our actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner²—and is where disparities in the healthcare and pharmaceutical industry make an appearance. Implicit bias is often seen present in areas of health treatment because of its subtle and subconscious identity.

Although their intent may be harmless, the habitual display of racial biases among major employees and healthcare providers is incredibly damaging to patient outcome. The 2012 National Healthcare Disparities Report (DHSS Agency for Healthcare Research, 2012), found that Black people received lower quality health care than white people on 43% of 191 tests; and Black people received better care on only 18% of the tests.³ Furthermore, a striking national study revealed that out of one million clinical visits for children with symptoms of respiratory infections, Black children were significantly less likely than white children to receive antibiotics, regardless of their medical or socioeconomic status.⁴ Similarly, another study shows that Black women receiving chemotherapy for breast cancer were more likely than white women to receive a nonstandard treatment regimen.⁵ Research has made it clear that these statistics do not represent biases towards or relating to social or economic status, but rather ethnic background and racial

identity. Across the board, general statistics relating to the treatment of minorities show saddening results that are applicable to many sectors of the healthcare industry.

As racial bias awareness is becoming increasingly recognized in medical industries, many individuals are striving to fight implicit attitudes using distinct algorithms. By being able to recognize racial bias more effectively in the healthcare and pharmaceutical industry, the disadvantageous medical effects of racial bias on minority communities can be decreased.



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WHY DO WE VOTE?

By Carissa Bruno '22

Voting can be a true hassle for many people across the United States. Taking a trip to polling places, standing in long lines, and analyzing each candidate's platforms can certainly be time-consuming. So why are people so inclined to vote each year? The voter's illusion, which is the tendency to make decisions based on the idea that other like-minded individuals might be making the same decision, is one of the many reasons why people vote.¹ The research of George A. Quattrone and Amos Tversky suggests that people choose to take part in actions that they have been told will have favorable outcomes. In other words, if one is told that something good will happen from taking part in a certain action, then they will do it regardless of any real, rational reasoning.²

In one experiment conducted by Quattrone and Tversky, subjects were asked to submerge their forearms into freezing water before and after physical exercise. Each group was told that a longer life expectancy was directly related to either increases or decreases in tolerance to the cold water after exercise. During the second round of the experiment, the subjects proved this hypothesis to be correct, showing tolerance changes based on with which diagnosis they were provided.

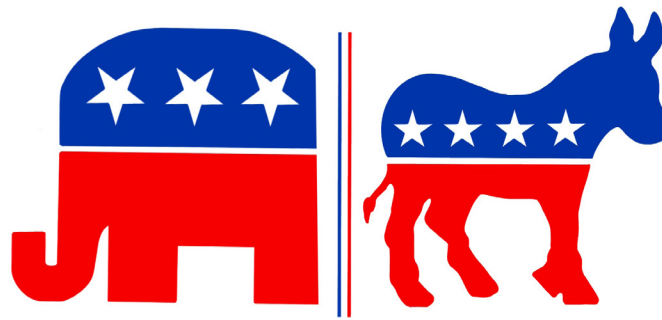
Similarly, in a second experiment conducted by Quattrone and Tversky, each subject was told one of two theories about voting in an election: that their

vote could influence like-minded people to vote or that it would not affect anyone else, whatsoever. As predicted, more subjects that were given the first theory indicated that they were more likely to vote than subjects who were given the second theory, even though in reality, each vote still had the same impact.²

The voter's illusion, where one believes that they *should* vote because of the likelihood of other like-minded people voting, is a key source of motivation for many. It is the perceived chance that one could have a decisive role in an election that urges people to say, "if everyone else just like me is voting, then I should too."

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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF POLARIZATION

By Clarence Liu '22

America has become increasingly polarized. The divide between the so-called “Left” and “Right” seems unbridgeable, with both sides lashing out at each other not just on their political views but also on their morality and humanity. In fact, people’s positions on key policy issues are heavily influenced by whether those issues are framed as supporting the ideals of the party they support.¹ Amidst all this chaos, one may ask themselves - where did this polarization come from?

First, let’s discuss the psychological effects at play in political parties. There are established psychological differences between each party. For example, fear increases conservatism, while external comfort fosters liberalism.² After the 9/11 attacks in 2001, both liberals and conservatives showed increased support for conservative issues, particularly with regards to President Bush and military spending.³ Another psychological divide between liberals and conservatives is that conservatives tend to be more squeamish and tend to look away from upsetting images. This squeamishness might negatively impact conservatives’ viewpoints on those alien to themselves, such as immigrants.² A final difference is that adults who had problems with conduct as children tend to distrust economic and political structures and lean right after growing up.⁴ Still, what causes the extreme partisanship we are seeing in America today? According to *Psychology Today*, a big part of this polarization is the advent of readily accessible technology. Nowadays, we get much of our information, political and otherwise, through social media apps such as Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. For one, because these apps are designed to show users content that they like, users are alienated from dissenting opinions. For example, a liberal may have their views constantly reaffirmed because their preferred social media site only gives them left-leaning information and content. This is known as the “echo chamber” effect.⁵

The “echo chamber” also promotes a partisan lens because of the brain’s inherent ability to fill in missing blanks by drawing on past information. This further leads one to believe that their party is superior. The partisan lens may also lead a politi-

cian to use “dog-whistles”, or terms only understood by those who support him. These echo chambers also influence our perception of different candidates⁵: for example, a conservative’s bias may make them consistently discredit Bernie Sanders and support Donald Trump, even if either party makes a statement in contradiction with their supposed political philosophies. Overall, political parties have many underlying psychological causes. However, the unprecedented political polarization of the modern era is a product of our increasingly technological society, giving rise to echo chambers that serve only to increase one’s bias towards their own political party.

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THE CORRUPT TRUTH OF FEAR AND POLITICS

By Catherine Cronin '23

Fear is one of the most powerful motivators, making it a staple in political campaigns. Politics are rooted in power and control, both of which are accessible through the utilization of fear.¹

Fear changes a person's behavior by producing an instinctual response that restricts logic. Historically, fear and misinformation have been used to gain power over groups. When politicians want control over a larger population, they separate the general population from a group that can be labeled as "different." Then, the politicians claim that this ostracized group is going to cause harm

and that only they can offer sufficient protection. By turning the marginalized group into a vague concept, it's easier to label them as a threat and to justify harm inflicted upon them.² The aftermath of 9/11 is a well-known example where political fear had destructive effects. The government took advantage of Americans' general state of panic to launch two wars, spend trillions of dollars, disobey international law, and completely rearrange the national security apparatus. Still, lingering fear led 90% of Americans to support launching military attacks in Afghanistan in 2001.³ However, David Rothkopf, a professor of international relations at Columbia University, argues that the fear-driven response promoted by the U.S. government ultimately hurt Americans and created political instability.⁴

In today's world, fear remains the backbone of American politics. Political candidates manage to invoke fear among the public in many ways. President Trump has largely based his campaign on unfounded fears of Biden's policies, while Biden boosts his popularity through the fear of Trump himself. Politicians also use the fear of certain ideas to discredit their opponents. Trump, for example, uses words like "socialism" and "the radical left" to scare his following into having a false perception of the central, capitalist nature of the majority of the Democratic party.⁵ This fear is at the heart of many political issues as well, such as illegal immigration and transgender rights. Though having no evidence, conservatives and liberals have created fear among Americans by calling immigrants from the Southern border "terrorists" and "rapists." This has allowed politicians to enact xenophobic policies and place undocumented immigrants in direct danger through ICE. Transgender bathroom

rights are still painted by conservatives as an outlet for sexual predators. This rhetoric has no evidence; however, it has influenced our social and political landscape greatly.¹



Fear in politics is largely influenced by misinformation and the appeal of a group. The Bandwagon Fallacy, where an individual will disregard logic to align with the ideas of a group, is prevalent in our political sphere. Unusual beliefs, when slapped with the label of "radical," become polarized and disconcerting to those in power, and so these ideas are dis-

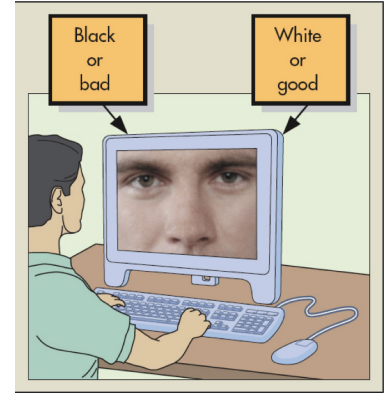
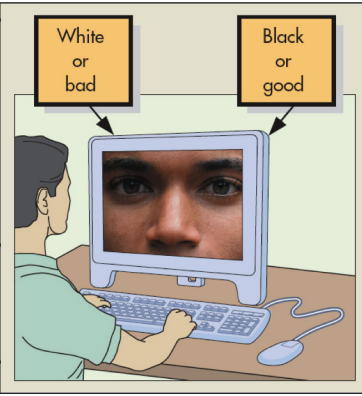
missed. Logic is only promoted and fear is only diminished through knowledge and civil conversation. So, while politics are heavily affected by fear, becoming aware of the influence it has on one's self is crucial in lessening fear's harmful effects.

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INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA AND ITS REFLECTION IN ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE

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By Izzy MacArthur '21

Laws, systems, and disparities facilitate America's historic legacy of racism.¹ Systemic racism spans from job access, housing, policing, mental health care, and more.² Focusing on access to mental health care, high rates of intergenerational trauma along with biases within the health care system illuminate one aspect of how systemic racism persists today.

Intergenerational trauma is prevalent throughout many populations and was originally observed by Brent Bezo in Ukrainian families affected by the Soviet Union's mistreatment of Ukrainians: "Each generation seemed to kind of learn from the previous one, with survivors telling children, 'Don't trust others, don't trust the world.'"³ To explain the breadth of intergenerational trauma, such symptoms within families are dated back to slavery, where notions and customs learned by families are passed down generation-to-generation and still affect those living today. The intergenerational trauma that is passed down onto Black Americans today, along with other traumas caused by systemic racism, contribute to the high rates of mental health issues and illnesses within the black population.

Keeping this in mind, the rising mental health needs among Black and African American citizens does not translate over to treatment rates. Overall, disparities within diagnosis and treatment are prevalent: more Black Americans and African Americans are diagnosed with schizophrenia than with depression or anxiety, despite the rising rates of the latter.⁴

The systemic racism and intergenerational trauma that affects Black Americans and African Americans and its correlation with mental health issues is not reflected in those treated for mental-health care: In 2018, 58.2% of Black and African American young adults ages 18-25 with serious mental illness did not receive treatment. This is also true for 50.1% of adults ages 26-49.⁴ The need for health treatment reformation is immediate and radical changes needs to be made in order to provide equal access and care.

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