

TheSocialScientist.

- Is trading simply the rich man's gambling?
- How gender stereotypes form.
- Pop Mart's magic marketing.
- The psychology of colour.
- How controllable is mental health?
- Never changing sexual identities.
- How foreign aid can save nations.
- What causes criminal activity?

Winter 2025 - Issue 2

Welcome to the Winter issue of the Social Scientist –our first written by our very own Year 12 Ambassadors.

With classic topics from the faculty, such as Mental Health, Leadership and Crime, we have a couple of interesting articles penned by Seneh, Hugo and the dream team Hailey, Chloe and Aryna. As Social Scientists in an evolving society, it is also our responsibility to highlight important issues such as gender stereotypes and sexual identities and keep the discussion going
around these. Thanks to Verity and Noah for doing just that.

With the foreign aid budget in jeopardy, our Economists, Isla and Iona, have been positively promoting the concept and how it can "save nations". Moreover, as uncertainty grips the world, with war and economic instability as well as the long-lasting effects of COVID 19, it is comforting to know that some concepts related to our subjects can bring some light relief in the form of a great article on Raghd's Psychology of Colour along with Chloe and Gwyneth's Magic Marketing.

And finally – our editor in chief has highlighted a contemporary issue affecting day traders and whether they are in fact gamblers in disguise. Thanks to Matt Cameron for producing the second of what hopes to be a very successful series of journals written by the students for the students.

Mrs Roberts – Head of Social Science

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Is trading simply the rich man's gambling?

Trading is the buying and selling of securities, such as stocks, bonds, currencies, commodities, and derivatives, with the goal of making a profit. While it comes in a variety of forms, this article will focus on the act of day trading. Day trading involves actively buying and selling securities within the day, aiming to capitalise on short-term changes in price to turn a profit. And then there's gambling, the act of betting or staking something of value in the hope of gain, on an uncertain outcome. In my opinion, those two definitions appear to marry up very well. But are they actually the same?



For starters, the stigma around each is very different. Imagine you see someone walk out of a nice house in a nice neighbourhood and, right before they get into their new sports car, you ask them how they made all this money. If they replied saying they do day trading, perhaps you'd imagine them to be well educated and hard working. Whereas if they replied saying they gamble, more likely than not you'd brush it off as extreme luck and perhaps even diminish their assets and achievements. Although, any person, despite their background and occupation, could both go all in on black or have bought a $1 share of bitcoin in 2011 and hit the jackpot.



In a survey of 4,222 gamblers using a casino app conducted by AcePerHead (an online gambling website), 13.5% left the casino having made money. However, not even 0.2% of these gamblers won over $150, while over 5% of them lost more than $5000. On the other hand, only 1.6% of day traders make a profit (as of 'What's The Big Data' 2024). Of these successful traders, their average profit per month is between 1 and 10% (as of 'Cap Trader'). As we see yet again, both acts seem to marry up nicely, perhaps with gambling looking slightly more profitable. No matter who you ask, how you think or what link you click on, this debate will host different answers using different stats as both sets of 'players' keep a level of privacy about wins and losses. Therefore, who knows if there ever be a definitive answer regarding the standings on trading, betting and how 'sensible' they are.

How gender stereotypes form.

Sociologist Ann Oakley identified four main ways parents enforce gender stereotypes: canalisation, where parents steer children's interests towards gender-appropriate toys and activities, such as dolls and kitchen sets for girls and trucks or sports equipment for boys; manipulation, which involves behaviours deemed suitable for a child's gender, such as boys being adventurous and girls being encouraging nurturing; verbal appellation, using nicknames like "Princess" for girls and "Rascal" for boys, reinforcing gendered traits; and activity exposure, assigning tasks like cooking or cleaning to girls and outdoor chores or physical tasks to boys. These actions subtly shape children's beliefs of their roles in society.

Children also learn by observing their parents. For instance, if a mother is responsible for domestic tasks while the father is the primary earner, children may internalise the idea that these roles are gender specific. Functionalist sociologist Talcott Parsons argued that such a division of labour within the nuclear family, which became prevalent between the 1920s and 1950s, is essential for the stability of both individuals and society. According to Parsons, teaching boys to be assertive and independent while encouraging girls to be nurturing and empathetic helps support social order.

Behaviour that aligns with gender norms is often rewarded, while non-conforming behaviour can be discouraged. For example, boys who play with trucks may receive praise, while girls who engage in rough play might be scolded for being "unladylike." Boys are encouraged to express themselves through strength and assertiveness, while girls are expected to display empathy and care. These responses reinforce stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity, shaping how children perceive their roles within society.

From a feminist perspective, gender role stereotypes are seen as products of a patriarchal society designed to keep male dominance and limit women's opportunities. Feminist theory, which has evolved over several waves from the 18th century to the present, seeks to challenge and dismantle these power dynamics, promoting gender equality by highlighting and questioning these socially constructed roles.

In conclusion, primary socialisation is fundamental in shaping children's understanding of gender roles. Through parental guidance, societal norms, and observational learning, children develop behaviours and expectations that align with their perceived gender. These early experiences profoundly influence their sense of identity and how they navigate social relationships and cultural expectations throughout their lives.





Pop Mart's magic marketing.



A major factor in Pop Mart's growth is its collaboration with social media influencers who highlight unboxing experiences on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. These influencers introduce their followers to Pop Mart's products, generating excitement and authenticity that drives sales. Unboxing videos, which reveal the surprise character inside each blind box, create suspense and tap into the fear of missing out (FOMO), motivating viewers to purchase quickly in hopes of collecting rare or exclusive figures. Additionally, influencers foster a sense of community among collectors, encouraging them to trade figures and share their collections, which keeps fans engaged and motivated to complete their sets.

Pop Mart's business model has driven rapid growth, particularly in China, where the collectible toy market is booming. After going public on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange in 2020, the company expanded into international markets, including Japan, South Korea, the United States, and Europe. In January 2022, Pop Mart opened its first UK store in London's Chinatown, followed by locations in Westfield Stratford City, Soho, Westfield London, and Hamleys. The brand's success in the UK reflects a broader trend of British consumers embracing East Asian culture, known as kawaii culture, which includes designer toys, fashion, and entertainment from Asia.

Pop Mart's physical stores and vending machines play a crucial role in its experiential marketing strategy. Designed to immerse customers in a playful and dynamic environment, these stores showcase new releases, limited editions, and visually appealing displays that captivate both dedicated collectors and casual visitors. The in-store unboxing experience adds excitement, encouraging customers to return and explore more. Vending machines, placed in high-traffic locations like shopping malls and entertainment centres, offer a convenient way to purchase blind boxes, delivering instant gratification and reinforcing the thrill of the blind-box model. This spontaneous and fun purchasing method makes Pop Mart's products more accessible to a wider audience, enhancing the brand's appeal.

Building a dedicated fan community is central to Pop Mart's strategy. Through online forums, social media platforms, and fan groups, collectors can share their experiences, trade figures, and discuss their collections, fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie. In addition to digital engagement, Pop Mart hosts in-person events such as pop-up stores, exhibitions, and fan meet-ups, providing exclusive products and immersive experiences that deepen the connection between the brand and its audience.

In conclusion, Pop Mart's success stems from its innovative use of social media influencers, immersive physical stores, and interactive vending machines, all of which create a sense of excitement and community among collectors. By blending surprise, accessibility, and engagement, Pop Mart has transformed the collectible toy market and built a global fanbase that continues to grow.

The Psychology of Colour.

Colour psychology explores how different colours influence human behaviour, emotions, and beliefs. People experience colours differently based on factors such as age, gender, and culture. Despite these differences, the connection between colours and emotions is universal, as colours can evoke specific feelings due to their wavelengths and energy.



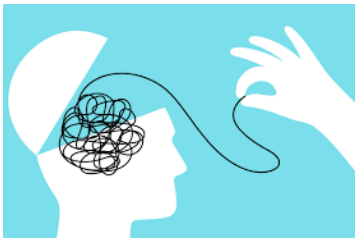
Cultural interpretations of colour can vary significantly. For example, in Western cultures, red often symbolises danger or passion, while in China, it represents good luck and prosperity. White is associated with purity and weddings in the West, yet it signifies mourning in many Eastern cultures. Similarly, purple is linked to royalty in Western societies but is associated with death and mourning in parts of Latin America. These cultural differences highlight the importance of understanding colour meanings, especially when designing for a global audience.

Colour plays a crucial role in branding and marketing. Research shows that up to 94% of a consumer's purchasing decision is influenced by the colour, appearance, and feel of a product, with texture accounting for only 6%. This proves why businesses must carefully consider the preferences of their target audience. For example, fast food chains often use red and yellow in their logos, as these colours are known to stimulate appetite and attract attention. By selecting colours that resonate with consumers, companies can enhance brand recognition and influence buying decisions.

Artists and designers also use colour psychology to convey emotions and messages. Warm colours like red and orange evoke feelings of warmth, comfort, and excitement, while cool colours like blue and green create a sense of calm and tranquillity. In interior design, colour choices change the atmosphere of a space: soft blues and greens promote relaxation, while vibrant reds and oranges can make a room feel cosy and inviting. Colour trends often evolve in response to cultural and societal changes, and designers must stay informed to create visually appealing and relevant work.

In conclusion, colour psychology offers valuable insights into how people perceive and respond to different colours. Whether in branding, art, or design, understanding the emotional and cultural significance of colours enables professionals to communicate more effectively and create experiences that resonate with their audiences.

How controllable is mental health?



The long-standing debate between free will and determinism plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals perceive their mental health. The belief in free will can empower individuals to take control of their mental well-being, while determinism can lead to feelings of helplessness due to factors perceived as beyond one's control.

Supporters of free will argue that individuals have the power to make choices that lead to personal growth and recovery. This belief fosters a sense of control and responsibility over one's actions, encouraging individuals to seek help and adopt strategies to improve their mental health. For instance, someone dealing with social anxiety might feel motivated to try cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) or acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT). They may also practice social interactions beforehand, believing that their actions can change their situation.

On the other hand, determinism suggests that behaviour and mental health are shaped by genetics, environment, and upbringing—factors beyond an individual's control. This perspective can lead to feelings of resignation, as people may view their challenges as inevitable. For example, someone with a family history of ADHD might feel limited by their condition, overlooking treatments like medication or behavioural therapies because they believe their situation is predetermined.

Cultural differences further influence how this debate affects mental health. In individualistic cultures, such as those in the United States and the United Kingdom, personal responsibility and self-reliance are emphasised. As a result, individuals are more likely to seek professional help and adopt proactive approaches to mental health. In contrast, collectivist cultures, such as China, prioritise social harmony and community support, viewing mental health issues as interconnected with broader societal influences. This cultural perspective can lead to different approaches to treatment, focusing on strengthening social bonds and seeking support within the community.

Understanding these cultural perspectives is essential for mental health professionals, as it allows them to tailor treatments to align with an individual's beliefs and cultural background. Recognising that both autonomy and external circumstances influence mental health can lead to more effective support and treatment, reducing the prevalence of mental health issues.

In conclusion, the free will vs determinism debate significantly shapes how individuals view their mental health and the steps they take toward recovery. By acknowledging the complex interplay between personal choice and external factors, society can foster a more compassionate and effective approach to mental health care, improving outcomes for individuals across diverse cultural contexts.

Never changing sexual identities.

Despite social progress across the globe, traditional attitudes toward sexuality and sexual identity persist in many areas of society. This resistance to change is influenced by factors such as workplace culture and media representations, which often reinforce long-standing norms.

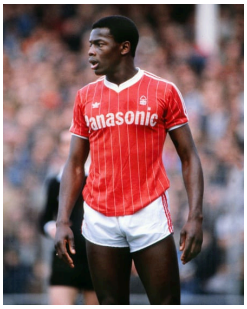
One prominent example is professional football, where players face intense scrutiny and pressure. Justin Fashanu, the first black footballer to be transferred for £1 million, became the first openly gay footballer in 1990. However, the scarcity of openly gay footballers since then highlights the ongoing stigma within the sport. Graeme Le Saux, a Premier League winner with Blackburn Rovers during the 1994/95 season, experienced homophobic abuse despite being married with children. His hobbies, believed "un-laddish" by some, sparked rumours that led to years of taunting. A notable incident occurred in 1999 when Liverpool striker Robbie Fowler mocked Le Saux during a match, resulting in misconduct charges for both players. Incidents like these contribute to a culture of fear and silence, discouraging players from coming out.

The media also plays a key role in reinforcing traditional attitudes toward sexuality. Through films, television shows, and advertisements, the media often portrays heterosexual relationships as the norm, promoting the concept of hegemonic masculinity, which associates "real men" with heterosexuality. This portrayal marginalises those who do not conform to these expectations, perpetuating stereotypes and limiting societal acceptance of diverse sexual identities.

However, progress is clear, with the media also serving as a platform for positive representation. A notable example occurred during the 2014 Commonwealth Games, where openly gay actors John Barrowman and Karan Dunbar led the opening ceremony, which included a symbolic same-sex kiss in a mock Gretna Green marriage ceremony. This act, seen by athletes from 47 countries where homosexuality was illegal, sent a powerful message of inclusivity and acceptance.

In conclusion, while societal attitudes toward sexuality and sexual identity remain rooted in tradition, change is underway. The challenge lies in balancing respect for cultural heritage with the need to foster an environment where individuals can express their identities without fear of discrimination. As global perspectives continue to evolve, the hope is for a future where diversity is celebrated, and acceptance becomes the norm.





How foreign aid can save nations.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) refers to financial aid provided by governments with the specific aim of supporting the economic development of developing countries. ODA typically includes foreign aid, loans, and grants, all of which are intended to help increase the Gross National Income (GNI) of recipient countries while improving their overall welfare.

Eligibility for Aid: The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) determines which countries qualify for ODA based on three key criteria: 1. Income Level: A country must be classified as low or middle income by the Bank of England to be eligible for aid. 2. Concessional Nature: The aid must be concessional, meaning that a portion of each donation is a grant that does not need to be repaid. The percentage of the grant increases as the recipient country's income decreases, ensuring that countries with the greatest financial need receive more assistance. 3. Purpose: The funds must be used specifically to promote economic development within the recipient country. Donation and Allocation • Currently, approximately 156 countries receive foreign aid, representing about 80% of all countries worldwide.

• The allocation of aid has changed over time. For example, São Tomé and Príncipe, the largest recipient in 2000, experienced a nearly 40% reduction in aid by 2021. Conversely, the Central African Republic saw a 16% increase during the same period. Despite these changes, Africa continues to receive the largest share of aid, with about half of the 2021/22 budget distributed to countries on the continent. • There are 97 donor organisations that provide foreign aid. Of these, 31 are DAC countries, 19 are bilateral donors (representing single governments), and 47 are multilateral institutions (involving multiple governments).

• The United Nations has set a target for each donor country to allocate 0.7% of its national wealth to ODA. However, as of 2023, only five countries had met or exceeded this target. The United States provided the largest total amount of aid, contributing $65 billion, though this represented only 0.24% of its GNI. In contrast, Norway donated $6 billion, but this equated to 1.09% of its GNI, significantly surpassing the UN target.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Foreign Aid Advantages:

1. Infrastructure Development: Foreign aid funds essential infrastructure projects, such as building roads, bridges, and ports. For example, the Millennium Challenge Corporation has invested billions of dollars in Africa and Asia to support economic growth.

South Korea's rapid economic development, aided by financial support from the United States, illustrates the long-term benefits of infrastructure investment. 2. Education and Healthcare: Aid improves access to education and healthcare, which increases the productivity and size of a country's labour force. The Global Fund, for instance, has provided billions of dollars to combat diseases like AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in Africa and Asia, enhancing public health and workforce productivity. 3. Economic Diversification: Foreign aid can help countries diversify their economies and reduce dependence on agriculture or natural resources. For example, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has supported the growth of manufacturing and service industries in Latin America.







Disadvantages:

1. Dependency: Long-term reliance on foreign aid can create economic dependency, preventing countries from developing self-sustaining economies. Ethiopia is a notable example, having received substantial foreign aid over the past two decades. While this support has contributed to economic growth, the country is still heavily dependent on agriculture and has struggled to diversify its economy. 2. Corruption and Mismanagement: Foreign aid can be misused or embezzled by corrupt officials, undermining its intended purpose. Additionally, inefficient delivery of aid can limit its positive impact on economic development. Impact of COVID-19 on ODA: The COVID-19 pandemic placed significant financial strain on countries worldwide, particularly low-income countries (LICs) that were already economically vulnerable. In response, the DAC reallocated funds and increased ODA to help countries cope with the crisis.

• Global ODA increased from $155 billion in 2019 to approximately $188 billion in 2020, representing a 21% rise.

• Although COVID-19-related aid decreased from $14.6 billion in 2019 to $7.2 billion in 2022, funding for COVID-19 control measures and other ODA programs increased during this period. This placed additional financial pressure on the DAC, highlighting the need for flexible and responsive aid systems capable of addressing unforeseen global crises.

In conclusion, foreign aid plays a critical role in promoting economic development by funding infrastructure projects, improving education and healthcare, and supporting economic diversification. However, its effectiveness depends on several factors, including the quality of governance in recipient countries and the efficient delivery of aid. Challenges such as corruption, mismanagement, and long-term dependency can limit the benefits of foreign aid. To maximise its impact, foreign aid must be adaptable to changing circumstances and crises, ensuring that it meets the evolving needs of developing countries while fostering sustainable economic growth.

What causes criminal activity?



The Role of Brain Structure, Genetics, and Personality Biological factors, particularly brain structure, can influence behaviour. The prefrontal cortex, responsible for decision-making, impulse control, and emotional regulation, plays a key role. Studies show that individuals with abnormalities or damage in this area often struggle to control impulsive or aggressive behaviour, increasing their likelihood of engaging in criminal activity. Research on violent offenders indicates that neurological impairments may contribute to poor judgment and heightened aggression. Genetics and personality traits also play a significant role. Psychologist Hans Eysenck's PEN personality theory identifies three traits—psychotics, extraversion, and neuroticism—that are linked to a higher likelihood of criminal behaviour. Individuals with high levels of psychotics, for example, may exhibit aggression, impulsivity, and a lack of empathy. Additionally, the MAOA gene, often called the "warrior gene," has been associated with aggressive behaviour, especially when combined with environmental stressors such as childhood abuse. This suggests that certain genetic predispositions, when paired with specific personality traits, can increase the risk of criminal behaviour. Environmental and Social Influences In contrast, proponents of the nurture perspective argue that criminal behaviour is primarily learned through life experiences and social environments.

Albert Bandura's social learning theory suggests that individuals learn criminal behaviour by observing and imitating others, especially in environments where crime is normalised or rewarded. For example, children raised in neighbourhoods where criminal activity is common may perceive it as acceptable or necessary for survival. Positive reinforcement, such as social approval or financial gain from criminal acts, further solidifies these behaviours. John Bowlby's attachment theory also highlights the importance of early life experiences. According to Bowlby, children who experience insecure or disrupted attachments with their caregivers are more likely to develop antisocial tendencies. Without stable and nurturing relationships, children may struggle with emotional regulation, empathy, and social bonding—skills essential for functioning in society. These emotional difficulties can manifest as criminal behaviour in adulthood, reinforcing the idea that an unstable or abusive upbringing can increase the likelihood of criminal activity.

Ultimately, criminal behaviour results from the complex interaction between biological and environmental factors. While genetics and brain structure may create a predisposition for criminal behaviour, environmental influences determine whether these tendencies are expressed. This balanced perspective is essential for developing effective crime prevention and rehabilitation strategies that address both inherent vulnerabilities and the social conditions that lead individuals toward crime. By understanding this interplay, society can create solutions that are both scientifically grounded and compassionate, helping to reduce crime and build safer communities.

The art of leadership.



Effective leadership is vital for organisational success. A Harvard Business Review study found that companies with strong leadership experience a 30% increase in employee engagement, boosting productivity by 50%. Different leadership styles shape workplace culture, influencing motivation, innovation, and overall performance in profound ways. Autocratic leadership is characterised by a leader who retains complete control over decision-making. While this ensures swift action and a clear chain of command, it can also stifle employee engagement and morale. However, when executed effectively, it can yield exceptional results. Sir Alex Ferguson, the legendary Manchester United manager, exemplifies this approach. By maintaining strict control over player transfers, training sessions, and match strategies, he created a disciplined and highly successful team. Despite the authoritarian nature of his leadership, his methods delivered outstanding results. In contrast, democratic leadership promotes participation, collaboration, and inclusivity. Leaders who adopt this style actively encourage employees to contribute ideas and take part in decision-making processes. This creates a sense of value and belonging among employees, often leading to greater satisfaction and productivity. However, the consultative nature of this leadership style can slow down decision-making, occasionally resulting in missed opportunities.

Richard Branson, the founder of the Virgin Group, is a prime example of a democratic leader. His ability to empower employees and foster a culture of openness and innovation has been instrumental in the success of his diverse business empire. Laissez-faire leadership is a stark contrast to both autocratic and democratic styles. This approach involves minimal supervision, granting employees significant autonomy in their roles. While this freedom can foster creativity and innovation, it can also result in confusion and inefficiency if not carefully managed. Industries that thrive on innovation often benefit from this style, as it encourages independent thinking and self-motivation. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, is driven by vision, inspiration, and a relentless pursuit of improvement. Leaders who adopt this approach inspire and motivate their teams, often leading to high levels of job satisfaction and outstanding performance. Nelson Mandela is a powerful example of a transformational leader. His ability to inspire a nation and lead South Africa towards progress through perseverance and vision demonstrates the profound impact of this leadership style.

The effect of leadership styles on workplace performance cannot be overstated. Motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction all hinge on the approach taken by leaders. Autocratic leadership proves effective in high-pressure environments where quick decision-making is essential, while democratic leadership fosters strong organisational culture and collaboration. Laissez-faire leadership can be beneficial in industries that value creativity and autonomy, while transformational leadership has the power to inspire large-scale change. Ultimately, the success of any leadership style depends on its application and the context in which it is used.



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