


## Social Psychology



### What is Social Psychology?

- **Social Psychology**
  - scientific study of how people's thoughts, feelings, and actions are influenced by social environment

### Attitudes

- **Attitude**
  - A belief and feeling about something that leads a person to behave in certain ways

### Attitudes

- What are some things that people have **strong attitudes** about?
- **Where** do our attitudes come from?
- What kinds of things can lead us to **change** our attitude about something?

### Attitude Formation

1. **Conditioning**
  - Being "rewarded" by others for having a certain attitude
2. **Observational Learning**
  - Influence of those we see around us

### Attitude Formation

3. **Cognitive Evaluation**
  - Based on evidence
4. **Cognitive Anchors**
  - Our earliest attitudes are like mental "anchors" that affect how we see things

### Attitudes Affect Behavior

- How can your **attitude** about something affect your **behavior**?
  - Attitudes affect behavior when...
    - when they are specifically tied
      - E.g., school vs. global warming
    - attitude is strong
    - person is aware of own attitude


### Behavior Affects Attitudes

- **B. Cognitive Dissonance Theory**
  - Leon Festinger (1959)
  - Unpleasant feeling when there's inconsistency in
    - beliefs and behavior
    - two or more beliefs

### Cognitive Dissonance

*Example: person on a diet binges*

This causes **dissonance**



## Cognitive Dissonance

Ways to reduce dissonance:

- Change attitude to match behavior
  - Diets don't really work anyway
  - I like the way I look, regardless of my weight
  - Looking thin is not important

## Cognitive Dissonance

**Example:**  
*A close friend does something really mean to another friend.*

**This causes dissonance**



## Behavior Affects Attitudes

### A. Stanford Prison Study

- People often adapt to roles and assume attitudes consistent with role



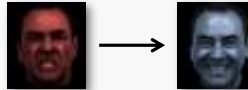
## Persuasion

- Definition
  - The direct attempt to **influence** or **change** other people' **attitudes**

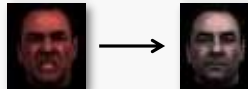
## Persuasion

- What does change mean?

BIG



SMALL



## Persuasion

### ▪ Central vs Peripheral Routes

- **Central Route** – evidence & logical arguments
- **Peripheral Route** – indirect; tries to link person/product/idea with something positive or negative

## Changing Attitudes with Persuasion

- What affects the persuasiveness of an argument?

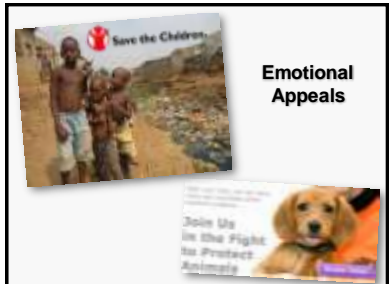
### 1. The Communicator (source)

- Credibility
- Expertise
- Physical attractiveness
- Similar to audience in age, ethnicity, etc.

## Changing Attitudes with Persuasion

### 2. The Message

- Repeated exposure
- Clear, convincing, logical
  - Central route
- **Emotional appeals**
  - Based on a strong emotion, not logic
  - Especially fear



**Emotional Appeals**

## Changing Attitudes with Persuasion

### 3. The Medium (how?)

- TV most widespread
- Face-to-face very effective, esp. in politics

## Changing Attitudes with Persuasion

### 4. The Audience

- Attitude change more likely when new attitude isn't too different
- Openness to change is related to age & education
- Audience should find message personally important

## Social Cognition

- Scientific study of how people perceive, interpret, and remember information about selves and others

## Attribution Theory

### ▪ Internal Attributions

- “That driver just cut me off. What a jerk!”

### • External Attributions

- “That driver just cut me off. She must be distracted.”

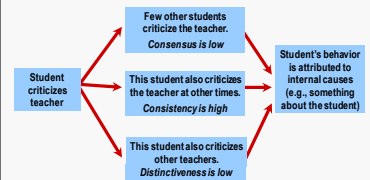


## Attribution Theory

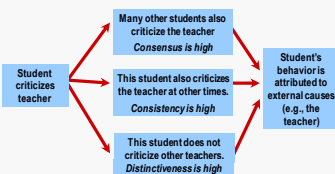
### ▪ Kelley's theory of attributions

- **Consensus**
  - Do other people act this way in this situation?
- **Consistency**
  - Does this person usually act this way in this situation?
- **Distinctiveness**
  - Does this person act this way in other situations?

## Kelley's theory of attributions



## Kelley's theory of attributions



## Attribution Errors

### ▪ Errors in Attribution

#### – Self-Serving Bias

- “I passed the psychology test because I'm smart. I failed the math test because it was unfair.”

#### – Fundamental Attribution Error

- “He yelled at his mother because he's mean.”
- Not because he's having a bad day, she said something rude, etc.

## Attribution Errors

### ▪ Errors in Attribution

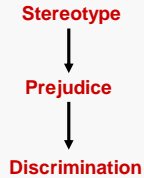
#### – Actor-Observer Effect

- “She failed the test because she's dumb. I failed because I didn't study.”

## Attribution Theory

- **Errors in Attribution**
  - Lead to blaming others inappropriately
  - Also lead to failure to accept responsibility for our own behavior
  - Do not exist equally in all cultures

## Prejudice: Definitions



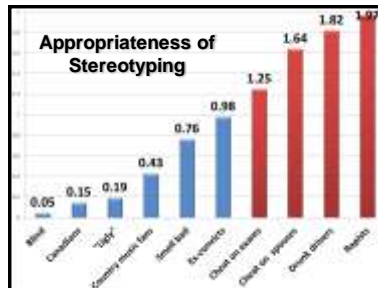
## Prejudice: Definitions

- **Stereotype**
  - **COGNITIVE**
    - a belief about the personal qualities of a group of people
      - some may be positive traits

## Studying Stereotypes

- 3 levels of stereotypes in today's research
  - **Public**
    - what we say to others about a group
  - **Private**
    - what we think, but don't say to others
  - **Implicit**
    - mental associations guiding our judgments and actions without our conscious awareness

## Appropriateness of Stereotyping



## Prejudice: Definitions

- **Prejudice**
  - **EMOTIONAL**
    - a negative attitude or emotional response toward a certain group and its individual members

## Prejudice: Definitions

- **Discrimination**
  - **BEHAVIORAL**
    - actively mistreating or neglecting people because of their group membership

## Ingroups vs. Outgroups

- **Ingroup**
  - Group an individual belongs to and feels loyalty for
- **Outgroup**
  - Group an individual has negative feelings toward

## How Stereotypes Begin

- **Illusory Correlation**
  - When someone in an outgroup does things to confirm a negative stereotype, people tend to remember it

## How Stereotypes Begin

- **Outgroup Homogeneity Effect**
  - People tend to see outgroups as being much more similar to each other than their ingroup

## Causes of Prejudice

1. **Exaggerating differences**
  - Making the differences between two groups larger than they are
  - *"We can never get along with you people. We're just too different."*

## Causes of Prejudice

2. **Blaming the Victim**
  - Tendency to assume that those who are worse off **deserve** it in some way
  - Can be frightening to think bad things happen randomly
  - *"Homeless people should try harder to find a job."*

## Causes of Prejudice

3. **Social learning**
  - Learning prejudices by watching those around you
  - *"Of course I think all XXX are bad. All my family and friends do, too!"*

## Causes of Prejudice

4. **Victimization**
  - View self as a victim of some set of "wrongs" inflicted by other group
  - *"If it weren't for all of THEM taking all our jobs, the economy would be much better!"*

## Causes of Prejudice

5. **Scapegoating**
  - Putting blame on another group your own or society's problems
  - *"Society would have no problems if it weren't for THOSE people ruining it for everyone!"*

## V. How Do Others Affect the Individual?

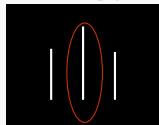
- **A. Conformity**
  - Changes in attitudes or behaviors to be consistent with those of others
    - May lead to positive or negative behaviors

### A. Conformity

- Which of the lines below is the same as the line to the right?



- **Asch study (1951)**



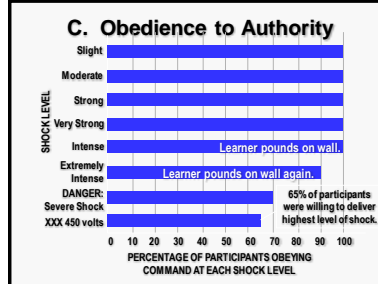
- What if 6 other people answered line 1 before it was your turn to answer?
- Some participants conformed and gave the wrong answer!

### A. Conformity

- **Factors influencing conformity**
  - Number
  - Dissenters
  - Cultural values

## V. How Do Others Affect the Individual?

- C. Obedience to Authority
  - Compliance with someone's **command** (not just their request)
  - Milgram's (1963) classic study
    - Teacher delivered increasing shocks to learner (or so thought)
    - Learner protested
    - Experimenter ordered to continue
    - Would the teacher continue?

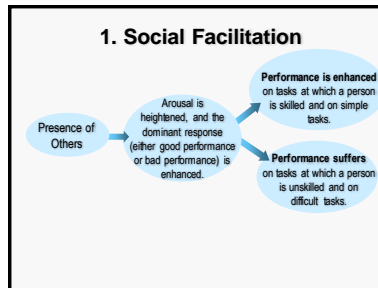


## C. Obedience to Authority

- Factors that facilitate / inhibit obedience
  - Presence of someone who refuses to obey
  - Background authority increases obedience
  - Culture does NOT have much of an effect on obedience
- Ethical concerns of Milgram's study
  - Deception
  - Potential for psychological harm to participants

## IV. What Are the Effects of Identifying with a Group?

- A. Group Performance
  - 1. Social Facilitation



## A. Group Performance

- 2. Social Loafing
  - Worsened performance when part of a group
  - Due to decreased effort and motivation
  - More likely when individual performance is difficult to identify
  - Less likely when
    - The task is rewarding
    - The group is cohesive
    - Individuals are identified

## A. Group Performance

- 3. Group Decision Making
  - Often results in poorer decisions than those made by individuals
    - Due to **groupthink**



## 3. Group Decision Making

- Sometimes groups make more extreme decisions than individuals would make
  - **Group polarization**
  - **Choice shift**

## A. Group Performance

- 4. Unrestrained Group Behavior
  - **Deindividuation**
    - Helps explain behavior of mobs
    - Loss of self-awareness
    - Leads to behavior individual would not typically do
    - Stanford Prison Experiment



### III. How Do People Relate to Each Other?

- **B. Aggression and Violence**
  - Aggression is any behavior intended to harm another person or thing
    - Physical
    - Verbal
    - Emotional

### B. Aggression and Violence

- 1. Is Aggression Innate?
  - Aggression is not a common response in many situations
  - Aggression aimed at achieving specific goals may be innate
    - E.g., protecting offspring
    - Such aggression has adaptive value

### B. Aggression and Violence

- 2. Does Frustration Cause Aggression?
  - **Frustration-aggression hypothesis** (Dollard et al., 1939)
  - More likely, frustration creates a **readiness** for aggression (Berkowitz, 1964)

### B. Aggression and Violence

- 3. Do People Learn How to Be Aggressive?
  - Social learning theory
  - Violence in the media
    - Effects may be long-lasting
    - Effects on immediate behavior
    - More exposure, more aggression
    - Less likely to help real-life victims of violence
    - Desensitizes to violence

### B. Aggression and Violence

- 4. Do Cognitions Contribute to Aggression?
  - Aggressive children perceive others as more hostile than non-aggressive children do
- 5. Gender Differences in Aggression
  - Men are more physically aggressive
  - Women use indirect aggression more than men
  - Differences likely related to differences in socialization and perceived consequences of aggressive behavior



### B. Aggression and Violence

- 6. Can Aggression Be Controlled?
  - Punishment is not very successful
  - Some violence prevention programs are successful
    - Help children interpret others' behaviors as less hostile
    - Develop interpersonal skills

### III. How Do People Relate to Each Other?

- **C. Prosocial Behavior**
  1. Altruism: Helping Without Rewards
    - Why does altruism exist if it is not rewarded?
    - Reinforcement may come from positive feelings, approval from others, or expectations of future help
    - So, does altruism really exist?

### 1. Altruism

- **Evolutionary views**
  - Altruism may be adaptive
  - More likely to help those to whom we're more closely related



### C. Prosocial Behavior

- 2. The Bystander Effect
  - Witnesses' unwillingness to help during an event
    - Increases when there are more witnesses
  - Latane and Darley (1970)
    - Is it an emergency?
    - Use other witnesses' behavior as cues
      - **Diffusion of responsibility**
    - Even the imagined presence of others decreases the likelihood of helping

## 2. The Bystander Effect

- When are bystanders more likely to offer help?
  - When alone
  - When they feel competent to help
  - When they know the victim
- Gender differences
  - Females more likely to help children
  - Males more likely to help females
  - Males more likely to respond to emergencies requiring physical action

## III. How Do People Relate to Each Other?

### A. Attraction and Relationship Formation

1. Proximity
2. Physical Attractiveness
  - Similar criteria across cultures
  - Evolutionary approaches
  - Changing standards of beauty
  - Not the most important factor in mate selection for most adults
3. Similarity

### A. Attraction and Relationship Formation

- 4. Friendships
  - Concept develops in preschool
  - Gender differences emerge early
- 5. Definitions of Love
  - Three components (Sternberg, 1986)
    - Intimacy
    - Commitment
    - Passion
  - **Companionate love**
  - **Consummate love**

### A. Attraction and Relationship Formation

- 6. Intimate and Love Relationships
  - **Intimacy**
    - Not present in all friendships or romantic relationships
    - Related to self-disclosure

## 6. Intimate and Love Relationships

- Evolutionary views on choosing relationship partners
  - Reproduction is longer and riskier for women
    - More selective in choosing a mate
  - Reproduction is quick and easy for men
    - Good genes and multiple partners important
  - Controversial view

### A. Attraction and Relationship Formation

- 7. Maintaining Relationships
  - a. Equity Theory
  - b. Attachment Theory
    - Secure attachments
    - Avoidant attachments
    - Ambivalent attachments