Social Relations

Module 45
Social Psychology

Social Relations

- Prejudice
- Aggression
- Attraction
- Altruism
- Conflict and Peacemaking
Social Relations

Social psychology teaches us how we relate to one another through prejudice, aggression, and conflict to attraction, and altruism and peacemaking.
Prejudice

Simply called “prejudgment,” a prejudice is an unjustifiable (usually negative) attitude toward a group and its members. Prejudice is often directed towards different cultural, ethnic, or gender groups.

Components of Prejudice

1. Beliefs (stereotypes)
2. Emotions (hostility, envy, fear)
3. Predisposition to act (to discriminate)
Reign of Prejudice

Prejudice works at the conscious and [more at] the unconscious level. Therefore, prejudice is more like a knee-jerk response than a conscious decision.
How Prejudiced are People?

Over the duration of time many prejudices against interracial marriage, gender, homosexuality, and minorities have decreased.
Racial & Gender Prejudice

Americans today express much less racial and gender prejudice, but prejudices still exist.

[Line graph showing percentage answering yes to questions about race and gender over time from 1936 to 1995.]
Race

Nine out of ten white respondents were slow when responding to words like “peace” or “paradise” when they saw a black individual’s photo compared to a white individual’s photo (Hugenberg & Bodenhausen, 2003).
Gender

Most women still live in more poverty than men. About 100,000,000 women are missing in the world. There is a preference for male children in China and India, even with sex-selected abortion outlawed.
Gender

Although prejudice prevails against women, more people feel positively toward women than men. Women rated picture b [feminized] higher (66%) for a matrimonial ad (Perrett & others, 1998).
Social Roots of Prejudice

Why does prejudice arise?

1. Social Inequalities
2. Social Divisions
3. Emotional Scapegoating
Social Inequality

Prejudice develops when people have money, power, and prestige, and others do not. Social inequality increases prejudice.
Us and Them

**Ingroup:** People with whom one shares a common identity. **Outgroup:** Those perceived as different from one’s ingroup. **Ingroup Bias:** The tendency to favor one’s own group.

Scotland’s famed “Tartan Army” fans.
Emotional Roots of Prejudice

Prejudice provides an outlet for anger [emotion] by providing someone to blame. After 9/11, many people lashed out against innocent Arab-Americans.
Cognitive Roots of Prejudice

One way we simplify our world is to **categorize**. We categorize people into groups by stereotyping them.

Foreign sunbathers may think Balinese look alike.
Cognitive Roots of Prejudice

In vivid cases such as the 9/11 attacks, terrorists can feed stereotypes or prejudices (terrorism). Most terrorists are non-Muslims.
Cognitive Roots of Prejudice

The tendency of people to believe the world is just, and people get what they deserve and deserve what they get (the just-world phenomenon).
Hindsight Bias

After learning an outcome, the tendency to believe that we could have predicted it beforehand may contribute to blaming the victim and forming a prejudice against them.
Aggression can be any physical or verbal behavior intended to hurt or destroy. It may be done reactively out of hostility or proactively as a calculated means to an end.

Research shows that aggressive behavior emerges from the interaction of biology and experience.
The Biology of Aggression

Three biological influences on aggressive behavior are:

1. Genetic Influences
2. Neural Influences
3. Biochemical Influences
Influences

**Genetic Influences:** Animals have been bred for aggressiveness for sport and at times for research. Twin studies show aggression may be genetic. In men, aggression is possibly linked to the Y chromosome.

**Neural Influences:** Some centers in the brain, especially the limbic system (amygdala) and the frontal lobe, are intimately involved with aggression.
Influences

**Biochemical Influences:** Animals with diminished amounts of testosterone (castration) become docile, and if injected with testosterone aggression increases. Prenatal exposure to testosterone also increases aggression in female hyenas.
The Psychology of Aggression

Four psychological factors that influence aggressive behavior are:

1. dealing with aversive events;
2. learning aggression is rewarding;
3. observing models of aggression; and
4. acquiring social scripts.
Aversive Events

Studies in which animals and humans experience unpleasant events reveal that those made miserable often make others miserable.

Ron Artest (Pacers) attack on Detroit Pistons fans.
Environment

Even environmental temperature can lead to aggressive acts. Murders and rapes increased with the temperature in Houston.
Frustration-Aggression Principle

A principle in which frustration (caused by the blocking of an attempt to achieve a desired goal) creates anger, which can generate aggression.
Learning that Aggression is Rewarding

When aggression leads to desired outcomes, one learns to be aggressive. This is shown in both animals and humans.

Cultures that favor violence breed violence. Scotch-Irish settlers in the South had more violent tendencies than their Puritan, Quaker, & Dutch counterparts in the Northeast of the US.
Observing Models of Aggression

Sexually coercive men are promiscuous and hostile in their relationships with women. This coerciveness has increased due to television viewing of R- and X-rated movies.
Acquiring Social Scripts

The media portrays *social scripts* and generates mental tapes in the minds of the viewers. When confronted with new situations individuals may rely on such social scripts. If social scripts are violent in nature, people may act them out.
Do Video Games Teach or Release Violence?

The general consensus on violent video games is that, to some extent, they breed violence. Adolescents view the world as hostile when they get into arguments and receive bad grades after playing such games.
Summary

Biological influences:
- genetic influences
- biochemical influences, such as testosterone and alcohol
- neural influences, such as severe head injuries

Psychological influences:
- dominating behavior (which boosts testosterone levels in the blood)
- believing you’ve drunk alcohol (whether you actually have or not)
- frustration
- aggressive role models
- rewards for aggressive behavior

Social-cultural influences:
- deindividuation from being in a crowd
- challenging environmental factors, such as crowding, heat, and direct provocations
- parental models of aggression
- minimal father involvement
- being rejected from a group
- exposure to violent media

Aggressive behavior
The Psychology of Attraction

1. **Proximity:** Geographic nearness is a powerful predictor of friendship. Repeated exposure to novel stimuli increases their attraction (*mere exposure effect*).

A rare white penguin born in a zoo was accepted after 3 weeks by other penguins just due to proximity.
2. **Physical Attractiveness**: Once proximity affords contact, the next most important thing in attraction is physical appearance.
Psychology of Attraction

3. **Similarity**: Similar views among individuals causes the bond of attraction to strengthen.

Similarity breeds content!
Romantic Love

**Passionate Love:** An aroused state of intense positive absorption in another, usually present at the beginning of a love relationship.

Two-factor theory of emotion

1. Physical arousal plus cognitive appraisal
2. Arousal from any source can enhance one emotion depending upon what we interpret or label the arousal
Romantic Love

**Companionate Love:** A deep, affectionate attachment we feel for those with whom our lives are intertwined.

*Courtesy of Werner Neke*
Altruism

An unselfish regard for the welfare of others.

**Equity**: A condition in which people receive from a relationship in proportion to what they give.

**Self-Disclosure**: Revealing intimate aspects of oneself to others.
Bystander Intervention

The decision-making process for bystander intervention.
Bystander Effect

Tendency of any given bystander to be less likely to give aid if other bystanders are present.
Conflict

Conflict is perceived as an incompatibility of actions, goals, or ideas.

The elements of conflict are the same at all levels. People become deeply involved in potentially destructive social processes that have undesirable effects.
Enemy Perceptions

People in conflict form diabolical images of one another.

Saddam Hussein “Wicked Pharaoh”

George Bush “Evil”
Cooperation

Superordinate Goals are shared goals that override differences among people and require their cooperation.

Communication and understanding developed through talking to one another. Sometimes it is mediated by a third party.
Graduated & Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension-Reduction (GRIT): This is a strategy designed to decrease international tensions. One side recognizes mutual interests and initiates a small conciliatory act that opens the door for reciprocation by the other party.