

# 2: SOCIAL COGNITION: HOW WE THINK ABOUT THE WORLD

## SU 2.1. SCHEMAS: MENTAL FRAMEWORKS FOR ORGANISING – AND USING – SOCIAL INFORMATION

- **Schemas:** Mental frameworks centering on a specific theme that help us to organize social information.

### THE IMPACT OF SCHEMAS ON SOCIAL COGNITION: ATTENTION, ENCODING, RETRIEVAL

- Schemas influence attention (the information we notice, for which schemas act as filters), encoding (the process by which information gets stored in memory), and retrieval.
- Information **inconsistent** with schemas is more likely to be noticed and to enter our consciousness.
- We rely most on schemas when we are experiencing cognitive load (a lot of information at once).
- Information that is consistent with our schemas is encoded. Information that is sharply inconsistent with our schemas may be encoded into a separate memory location and marked with a unique “tag”.
- Regarding memory: In general, people report remembering more information consistent with their schemas, but information inconsistent with their schemas may be strongly present in memory too.

### PRIMING: WHICH SCHEMAS GUIDE OUR THOUGHT?

- **Priming:** a situation that occurs when stimuli or events increase the availability in memory or consciousness of specific types of information held in memory. Schemas can be temporarily activated by priming.
- **Unpriming:** Refers to the fact that the effects of the schemas tend to persist until they are somehow expressed in thought or behaviour and only then do their effects decrease. If primed schemas are not expressed, their effects may persist for long periods of time.
- The stronger and better-developed our schemas are, the more likely they are to influence our thinking, and especially our memory for social information.

### SCHEMA PERSISTENCE: WHY EVEN DISCREDITED SCHEMAS CAN SOMETIMES INFLUENCE OUR THOUGHT BEHAVIOUR

- **Perseverance effect:** The tendency for beliefs and schemas to remain unchanged even in the face of contradictory information.
- Evidence suggests that schemas can be self-fulfilling – they both shape and reflect the social world.

- Schemas help us make sense of the social world and process information efficiently, but they can also lock us into acting in ways that create the world we expect.

## REASONING BY METAPHOR: HOW SOCIAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR ARE AFFECTED BY FIGURES OF SPEECH

- **Metaphor:** A linguistic device that relates or draws a comparison between one abstract thought and another dissimilar concept.
- Because metaphors can activate different kinds of social knowledge, they can influence how we interpret events.

## SU 2.2. HEURISTICS: HOW WE REDUCE OUR EFFORT IN SOCIAL COGNITION

- **Social cognition:** The manner in which we interpret, analyse, remember, and use information about the social world.
- **Heuristics:** Simple rules for making complex decisions or drawing inferences in a rapid and seemingly effortless manner.
- **Affect:** our current feelings and moods.
- When we are subjected to more information than what we are capable of processing at one time, this results in information overload.
- Processing capacity can be diminished by stress levels.
- We rely on heuristics because they allow us to do more, with less effort.

## REPRESENTATIVENESS: JUDGING BY RESEMBLANCE

- **Prototype:** Summary of the common attributes possessed by members of a category.
- **Representativeness heuristic:** A strategy for making judgements based on the extent to which current stimuli or events resemble other stimuli or categories.
- Decisions based on the representative heuristic can be wrong, because they tend to ignore base rates.
- **Base rates:** the frequency with which given events or patterns occur in the total population.
- Cultural groups differ in the extent to which they rely on the representative heuristic and expect “like to go with like” in terms of causes and effects.
- Compared to North Americans, Asians rely less on the representative heuristic.

## AVAILABILITY: “IF I CAN RETRIEVE INSTANCES, THEY MUST BE FREQUENT”

- **Availability heuristic:** A strategy for making judgments on the basis of how easily specific kinds of information can be brought to mind.

- Use of availability heuristic can cause us to overestimate the likelihood of events that are dramatic but rare because they are easy to bring to mind.
- When using the availability heuristic, the amount of information we can recall is also influential.
- If the judgement involves emotions or feelings, we tend to rely on the “ease” rule, whereas if the judgement involves facts or if the task is inherently difficult, we tend to rely more on the “amount” rule.

## ANCHORING AND ADJUSTMENT: WHERE YOU BEGIN MAKES A DIFFERENCE

- **Anchoring and adjustment heuristic:** A heuristic that involves the tendency to use a number, value, or personal experience as a starting point to which we then make adjustments. An example is when a seller sets the price higher than he expects to get, and a buyer bids lower than he is willing to pay.
- We have a tendency to let initial anchors influence our judgements.
- Although we make adjustments to anchors, these adjustments are often not sufficient to overcome the initial impact of the anchors.
- The tendency to make insufficient judgements is greater when people are in a state in which they are less capable of engaging in effortful thought.

## STATUS QUO HEURISTIC: “WHAT IS, IS GOOD”

- When people are asked to make judgements and choices, they seem to act as though they believe the status quo is good. For example, the brand that has been on the market longer is better than the newer brand.

## SU 2.3. AUTOMATIC AND CONTROLLED PROCESSING: TWO BASIC MODES OF THOUGHT

- Social thought can occur in either of two different ways: in a systematic, logical, and highly effortful manner (**controlled processing**), or in a fast, relatively effortless, and intuitive manner (**automatic processing**). Both may occur together.
- Research suggests that people have two different neural systems for processing social information – one that operates in an automatic manner, and one that operates in a systematic and controlled manner.

## AUTOMATIC PROCESSING AND AUTOMATIC SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

- **Automatic processing:** This occurs when, after extensive experience with a task or type of information, we reach the stage where we can perform the task or process the information in a seemingly effortless, automatic, and nonconscious manner.

- Research also shows that once automatic processing is initiated (e.g. through priming), individuals may – unconsciously – begin to prepare for future interactions with the people or groups who are the focus of this automatic processing.

## THE BENEFITS OF AUTOMATIC PROCESSING: BEYOND MERE EFFICIENCY

- Research shows that we often attempt to deal with problems, and even complex decisions, while our attention is directed elsewhere.
- Recent research suggests that automatic processing may even be superior to conscious thought when it comes to making good decisions.
- Automatic thought has greater capacity, and may also reflect our real preferences more clearly.

## SU 2.4. POTENTIAL SOURCES OF ERROR IN SOCIAL COGNITION: WHY TOTAL RATIONALITY IS RARER THAN YOU THINK

### A BASIC “TILT” IN SOCIAL THOUGHT: OUR POWERFUL TENDENCY TO BE OVERLY OPTIMISTIC

- **Optimistic bias**: Our predisposition to expect things to turn out well overall.
- **Negativity bias**: We show greater sensitivity to negative information than to positive information. The negativity bias is not universal, and may be eliminated if we find ourselves in situations in which paying attention to positive information is useful.
- **Overconfidence barrier**: The tendency to have more confidence in the accuracy of our own judgements than is reasonable.
- Most people believe they are more likely than others to experience positive events, and less likely to experience negative events.
- People who are least competent in a domain are often most likely to be overconfident of their judgements in that domain.
- Overconfidence often stems from errors of omission. We lack the relevant feedback that would help moderate our confidence.

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### THE ROCKY PAST VERSUS THE GOLDEN FUTURE: OPTIMISM AT WORK

- We tend to think our future will be happy and ‘golden’, with few negative events.
- When we think about the past, we tend to remember failures and unpleasant events.
- When we think about the future, we focus on our dreams and plans.
- Being optimistic about the future can make us feel good. If the basis for it is disconfirmed, we may feel bad – but only temporarily.

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## WHEN OPTIMISM AFFECTS OUR ABILITY TO PLAN EFFECTIVELY

- **Planning fallacy:** The tendency to make optimistic predictions concerning how long a given task will take for completion.
- When we make predictions about how long it will take to complete a task, we enter a planning or narrative mode of thought in which we focus primarily on the future and how we will perform the task. As a result, we are unable to remember how long similar tasks previously took.
- When we do take into account past experiences in which tasks took longer than expected, we tend to attribute such outcomes to factors outside our control.
- Our estimates of when we will complete a task are also influenced by our hopes and desires: we want to finish at a certain time, so we predict that we will.
- Power leads us to focus too narrowly on task completion, rather than the steps involved in getting there, which can lead us to seriously underestimate how long it will take to finish tasks.

## SITUATION-SPECIFIC SOURCES OF ERROR IN SOCIAL COGNITION: COUNTERFACTUAL THINKING AND MAGICAL THINKING

- **Counterfactual thinking:** The tendency to imagine other outcomes in a situation than the ones that actually occurred (“what might have been”).
- Counterfactual thoughts seem to occur automatically in many situations.
- Studies show that anything that reduces our information-processing capacity strengthens the impact of counterfactual thoughts on our judgements and behaviour.
- Counterfactual thinking can influence our social thought.
- Depending on its focus, imagining counterfactuals for outcomes we receive can yield either boosts to, or reductions in, our current moods. If individuals imagine upward counterfactuals, the result may be dissatisfaction and envy. If individuals compare their current outcomes with less favourable ones, they may experience positive feelings of satisfaction and hopefulness.
- We often use counterfactual thinking to mitigate the bitterness of disappointments.
- Sometimes, engaging in counterfactual thought can enhance performance on important tasks.
- **Thought suppression:** Efforts to keep thoughts out of our consciousness. This involves two components: a monitoring process, acting also as an early warning system, and an operating process, which includes an active prevention system. The two processes are effective, except when people are tired, experience information overload, or are emotional. People may then sometimes experience a rebound effect, where attempts to suppress unwanted thoughts lead to people actually thinking more about the information.

- **Magical thinking:** Thinking involving assumptions that don't hold up to rational scrutiny – for example, the belief that things that resemble one another share fundamental properties.
- One principle of magical thinking assumes that one's thoughts can influence the physical world in a manner not governed by the laws of physics.
- Our thinking about many situations is frequently influenced by magical thinking.
- **Terror management:** Our efforts to come to terms with the certainty of our own death and its unsettling implications.
- Some researchers believe that when we come face to face with the certainty of our own deaths, we try to manage the strong reactions this produces, and one way of doing this is to engage in thinking that is largely outside of what we consider to be rational thought.

## SU 2.5. AFFECT AND COGNITION: HOW FEELINGS SHAPE THOUGHT AND THOUGHT SHAPES FEELINGS

### THE INFLUENCE OF AFFECT ON COGNITION

- Our current moods can influence our perceptions of the world around us. When we are experiencing positive affect, we tend to perceive almost everything in more positive terms.
- We are more likely to judge statements as true if we encounter them while in a positive mood.
- Positive moods encourage people to feel that they understand the world better.
- Positive moods can also result in less accurate judgements.
- **Mood congruence effects:** The fact that we are more likely to store or remember positive information when in a positive mood and negative information when in a negative mood.
- **Mood dependent memory:** The fact that what we remember while in a given mood may be determined, in part, by what we learned when previously in that mood.
- Current moods serve as a kind of retrieval cue, prompting recall of information consistent with your moods.
- Being in a happy mood can increase creativity. Positive moods facilitate creativity most when they are relatively high in arousal (happiness) rather than low (relaxation).
- People experiencing positive affect are more likely than people experiencing negative affect to engage in heuristic thought in dealing with current problems or decisions.
- Our current moods often influence our interpretations of the motives behind people's behaviour.

### THE INFLUENCE OF COGNITION ON AFFECT

- **Schachter's two-factor theory of emotion:** This theory suggests that when we don't know our own feelings or attitudes directly, we infer their nature from the external world.

- Cognition can also influence emotions by activating schemas containing a strong affective component. How we think about others – and who we think those others are – tells us how we feel about such people.
- When we feel “down” or distressed, we often yield to temptations that we know are bad for us in the long run, but make us feel better. Research shows that this is because these temptations help us deal with strong negative feelings.
- The tendency to yield to temptation is a conscious choice, not a simple lapse in the ability to control our own impulses.

## AFFECT AND COGNITION: SOCIAL NEUROSCIENCE EVIDENCE FOR TWO SEPARATE SYSTEMS

- Two distinct systems for processing social information may exist within the human brain: the first is concerned with reason – logical thought – whereas the other deals primarily with affect or emotion.
- These two systems interact in many ways during problem solving, decision making, and other forms of cognition.
- Research shows that the neural system for emotion tends to be impulsive, preferring immediate rewards, whereas the system for reason is more forward-looking and accepting of delays that ultimately yield larger rewards.

# 3: SOCIAL PERCEPTION: PERCEIVING AND UNDERSTANDING OTHERS

- **Social perception**: The process through which we seek to know and understand other people.
- **Nonverbal communication**: Communication between individuals that does not involve the content of spoken language. It relies instead on an unspoken language of facial expressions, eye contact, and body language.
- **Attribution**: The process through which we seek to identify the causes of others' behaviour and so gain a knowledge of their stable traits and dispositions.
- **Impression formation**: The process through which we form impressions of others.
- **Impression management (self-presentation)**: Efforts by individuals to produce favourable first impressions on others.

## SU 3.1. NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION: THE UNSPOKEN LANGUAGE OF EXPRESSIONS, GAZES, AND GESTURES

- Both our own and other people's social actions can be affected by temporary factors or causes. This includes changing moods, shifting emotions, fatigue, illness, drugs, the menstrual cycle, etc.
- Non-verbal cues can give us clues as to how people are feeling, because non-verbal cues are relatively irrepressible.
- Women might have better nonverbal skills, specifically regarding others' appearance, than men.

## NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION: THE BASIC CHANNELS

- Our feelings are usually revealed through 5 basic channels: facial expressions, eye contact, body movements, posture, and touching.

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### FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AS CLUES TO OTHERS' EMOTIONS

- We can learn much about others' current moods from their facial expressions.
- Five basic emotions are represented clearly, and from a very early age: anger, fear, happiness, sadness, and disgust.
- Emotions occur in many combinations, and each of these reactions can vary greatly in strength.
- Most research confirms that facial expressions are fairly universal.

- Cultural differences do exist with respect to the precise meaning of facial expressions.
- When people know each other very well, they are better at “reading” each other’s nonverbal cues.

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#### GAZES AND STARES: EYE CONTACT AS A NONVERBAL CUE

- We often learn much about others’ feelings from their eyes.
- A high level of gazing from another is usually a sign of liking or friendliness.
- Avoiding eye contact is usually interpreted as unfriendly, or shy.
- **Staring:** A form of eye contact in which one person continues to gaze steadily at another regardless of what the recipient does.
- Staring can be interpreted as anger or hostility (cold stare).

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#### BODY LANGUAGE: GESTURES, POSTURE, AND MOVEMENTS

- **Body language:** Cues provided by the position, posture, and movement of others’ bodies or body parts.
- Body language often reveals others’ emotional states.
- Large numbers of movement, especially ones in which one part of the body does something to another part, suggest emotional arousal.
- Larger patterns of movements, involving the whole body, can be informative.
- **Emblems:** Body movements carrying specific meanings in a given culture.

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#### TOUCHING: WHAT DOES IT CONVEY?

- Depending on certain factors (such as who does the touching, or the nature of the touch), touch can suggest affection, sexual interest, dominance, caring, or even aggression.
- When touching is considered appropriate, it often produces positive reactions.
- The firmer, longer, and more vigorous others’ handshakes are, the higher we tend to rate them in terms of extraversion and openness to experience, and the more favourable our first impressions of them tend to be.
- A light, comforting pat on the arm can induce feelings of security among both men and women, but only if it is done by a woman.
- Such feelings of security can influence actual behaviour.

#### SCENT: ANOTHER SOURCE OF NONVERBAL SOCIAL INFORMATION

- **Paralingual cues:** Changes in the tone or inflection of others’ voices.
- Subtle cues relating to others’ body chemistry can be revealing.

- Changes in women's internal chemistry occurring during the menstrual cycle can be transmitted to others through subtle olfactory cues.

## ARE FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AN ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT OTHERS?

- Facial expressions are a uniquely crucial source of information about others.
- It is almost impossible to ignore facial expressions.
- To the extent a person's neutral facial expression resembles a particular emotional expression, they are seen as showing this emotion, even when in fact they are not experiencing any strong emotion.
- Male faces are seen as resembling angry expressions to a greater extent than female faces, and black and Korean faces are seen as resembling expressions of happiness or surprise to a greater extent than white faces.
- We tend to perceive more in others' faces than is really there.
- Facial expressions are not only external signs of internal states, they can also trigger or influence internal emotional experiences.
- The view that facial expressions can actually trigger emotions is known as the **facial feedback hypothesis**.

## THE FACIAL FEEDBACK HYPOTHESIS

- The facial feedback hypothesis suggests that there is a close link between the facial expressions we show and our internal feelings, and that this relationship works both ways: the expressions we show reflect our internal feelings/emotions, but these expressions also feed back into our brains and influence our subjective experiences of emotion.

## DECEPTION: RECOGNIZING IT THROUGH NONVERBAL CUES, AND ITS EFFECTS ON SOCIAL RELATIONS

- Most people tell at least one lie every day, and use deception in almost 20% of their social interactions.
- The majority of strangers lie to each other at least once during a brief first encounter.
- People lie to avoid hurting others feelings, conceal their real feelings/reactions, or to avoid punishment for misdeeds.
- We tend to perceive others as truthful, and do only a little better than chance in determining whether they are lying.
- Our desire to be polite makes us reluctant to discover deception.
- We don't always pay attention to nonverbal cues that might reveal deception.
- We tend to assume that if people are truthful in one situation, they will be truthful in others.
- **Microexpressions**: fleeting facial expressions lasting only a few tenths of a second. Such reactions appear quickly after an emotion-provoking event and are difficult to suppress.

- **Interchannel discrepancies:** Inconsistencies between nonverbal cues from different basic channels. These result from the fact that people who are lying often find it difficult to control all these channels at once.
- **Eye contact:** People who are lying often blink more often and show pupils that are more dilated. They may also show an unusually low or high level of eye contact.
- **Exaggerated facial expressions:** They may smile more – or more broadly – than usual or may show greater sorrow than is typical in a given situation.
- When people are lying, the pitch of their voices often rises, and they also take longer to begin. They may show a tendency to start sentences, stop them, and begin again.

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#### THE EFFECTS OF DECEPTION ON SOCIAL RELATIONS

- When people find out they have been lied to, they react with mistrust and disliking toward the deceiver.
- After being exposed to someone who lies, most people are more willing to engage in such behaviour themselves.
- Lying undermines the quality of social relationships.

## SU 3.2. ATTRIBUTION: UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSES OF OTHER PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOUR

### THEORIES OF ATTRIBUTION: FRAMEWORKS FOR UNDERSTANDING HOW WE MAKE SENSE OF THE SOCIAL WORLD

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#### FROM ACTS TO DISPOSITIONS: USING OTHERS' BEHAVIOUR AS A GUIDE TO THEIR LASTING TRAITS

- **Correspondent inference:** A theory describing how we use others' behaviour as a basis for inferring their stable dispositions.
- Often, individuals act in certain ways not because doing so reflects their own preferences or traits, but rather because external factors leave them little choice. We cope with this by focusing our attention on actions that seem to have been freely chosen, and pay full attention to actions that show noncommon effects.
- **Noncommon effects:** Effects produced by a particular cause that could not be produced by any other apparent cause.
- We also pay more attention to actions that are low in social desirability.

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## KELLEY'S THEORY OF CAUSAL ATTRIBUTIONS: HOW WE ANSWER THE QUESTION "WHY?"

- When trying to figure out the reasons for others' behaviour, we often ask: Did others' behaviour stem mainly from internal causes, mainly from external causes, or from a combination of the two?
- When considering the reasons for others' behaviour, we focus on 3 types of information: consensus (the extent to which other people react to some stimulus or even in the same manner as the person we are considering), consistency (the extent to which an individual responds to a given stimulus or situation in the same way on different occasions), and distinctiveness (the extent to which an individual responds in the same manner to different stimuli or events).
- We are most likely to attribute another's behaviour to internal causes under conditions in which consensus and distinctiveness are low but consistency is high.
- We are most likely to attribute another's behaviour to external causes when consensus, consistency, and distinctiveness are high.

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## OTHER DIMENSIONS OF CAUSAL ATTRIBUTION

- Some internal causes of behaviour tend to be quite stable over time, while others can, and often do, change greatly.
- Some internal causes are controllable, while others are not. The same is true for external causes of behaviour.
- In trying to understand the causes behind others' behaviour, we take note of all three dimensions: internal-external, stable-unstable, and controllable-uncontrollable.

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## ARE THE EVENTS IN OUR LIVES "MEANT TO BE", OR DO WE MAKE THEM HAPPEN? FATE ATTRIBUTIONS VERSUS PERSONAL CHOICE

- One interpretation is that they are due to our own actions.
- Another explanation attributes such events to fate.
- Norenzayan and Lee suggest that belief in fate is related to two more basic beliefs: religious convictions concerning the existence of God, and a belief in complex causality (the idea that many causes influence such events, and that no one cause is essential).

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## ACTION IDENTIFICATION AND THE ATTRIBUTION PROCESS

- **Action identification:** The level of interpretation we place on an action; low-level interpretations focus on the action itself, while higher-level interpretations focus on its ultimate goals.

- The more others' actions are interpreted at higher levels, the actors are also seen as possessing more complex motives, goals, and thought processes.

## ATTRIBUTION: SOME BASIC SOURCES OF ERROR

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### THE CORRESPONDENCE BIAS: OVERESTIMATING THE ROLE OF DISPOSITIONAL CAUSES

- **Correspondence bias (fundamental attribution error):** The tendency to explain others' actions as stemming from dispositions even in the presence of clear situational causes. (The tendency to overestimate the impact of dispositional cues on others' behaviour.)
- Correspondence bias seems to be more common, and much stronger, in individualistic cultures.

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### THE CORRESPONDENCE BIAS: STRONGER THAN YOU MIGHT GUESS!

- Jones and Harris' research showed that, in general, people tend to attribute others' actions to internal factors, even when they know that this is not the case.
- In Nisbett's study, it was found that people reported that their own behaviour varied from situation to situation, whereas that of other people reflected primarily personal traits.

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### THE CORRESPONDENCE BIAS AND GENDER: "SHE'S EMOTIONAL, BUT HE'S JUST HAVING A BAD DAY"

- Many people still hold the view that women are more emotional than men, despite research findings pointing to the contrary.
- When people behave emotionally, we are more likely to attribute this to stable characteristics for women than men.

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### WHY DOES THE FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTION ERROR OCCUR?

- One possibility is that, from our perspective, the person we are observing is high in perceptual salience and is the focus of our attention, whereas situational factors that might also have influenced this person's behaviour are less salient and so seem less important to us.
- Another possibility is that we notice such situational causes but give them insufficient weight in our attributions.
- Another possibility is that when we focus on others' behaviour, we tend to begin by assuming that their actions reflect their underlying characteristics. Then, we

attempt to correct for any possible effects of the external world by taking these into account. However, this correction is often insufficient.

- We perceive that we are less likely to fall victim to the correspondence bias than others.

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#### THE ACTOR-OBSERVER EFFECT: “YOU FELL; I WAS PUSHED”

- **Actor-observer effect:** The tendency to attribute our own behaviour mainly to situational causes but the behaviour of others mainly to internal (dispositional) causes.
- We are more aware of the external factors affecting our own actions but less aware of such factors affecting the lives of others.

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#### THE SELF-SERVING BIAS: “I’M GOOD; YOU ARE LUCKY”

- **Self-serving bias:** The tendency to attribute positive outcomes to internal causes, but negative outcomes or events to external causes.
- Explanations for the self-serving bias fall in one of two categories: cognitive and motivational explanations.
- **The cognitive model:** We attribute positive outcomes to internal causes, but negative ones to external causes because we expect to succeed, and have a tendency to attribute expected outcomes to internal more than to external causes.
- **The motivational explanation:** The self-serving bias stems from our need to protect and enhance our self-esteem or the related desire to look good to others.
- Several studies show that the strength of the self-serving bias varies across cultures. The self-serving bias may be weaker in collectivistic than individualistic countries.
- The self-serving bias can cause interpersonal friction.

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#### THE SELF-SERVING BIAS AND EXPLANATIONS FOR UNEXPECTED, NEGATIVE EVENTS

- We often attribute unexpected negative events to external agencies.
- When positive events occur, we tend to attribute these events to internal causes.

### APPLICATIONS OF ATTRIBUTION THEORY: INSIGHTS AND INTERVENTION

- Depressed people tend to make self-defeating attributions.
- In contrast to most people, who show the self-serving bias, depressed people tend to attribute negative outcomes to lasting, internal causes, but attribute positive outcomes to

temporary, external causes. As a result, such people perceive that they have little or no control over what happens to them.

- Once a person is depressed, the tendency to engage in this self-defeating pattern is strengthened, and a vicious cycle is often initiated.
- Effective therapeutic treatments focus on getting depressed people to change their attributions.

## SU 3.3. IMPRESSION FORMATION AND IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT: COMBINING INFORMATION ABOUT OTHERS

### THE BEGINNINGS OF RESEARCH ON FIRST IMPRESSIONS: ASCH'S RESEARCH ON CENTRAL AND PERIPHERAL TRAITS

- Solomon Asch: “We look at a person and immediately a certain impression of his character forms itself in us. A glance, a few spoken words are sufficient to tell us a story about a highly complex matter...”
- Asch applied the principle ideas of Gestalt psychology to understanding impression formation, suggesting that we do not form impressions simply by adding together all of the traits we observe in other people. Rather, we perceive these traits in relation to one another, so that the traits cease to exist individually and become, instead, part of an integrated, dynamic whole.

### HOW QUICKLY ARE FIRST IMPRESSIONS FORMED – AND ARE THEY ACCURATE?

- **Thin slices:** refers to small amounts of information about others we use to form first impressions of them.
- Many studies have reported that even working with thin slices of information about others, perceivers' first impressions are reasonably accurate.
- First impressions can be formed very quickly and are at least slightly better than chance in terms of accuracy.
- The greater the person's confidence in their judgements, the more accurate the impressions.
- One study found that the relationship between perceivers' confidence in their own first impressions and the accuracy of these impressions was curvilinear: when confidence was very low, their first impressions were inaccurate. As confidence rose, accuracy increased, but only up to a point. Then it levelled off or even declined. In addition, perceivers who used a gut-level “intuitive” approach to forming first impressions did better than ones who used a more analytical approach.

## IMPLICIT PERSONALITY THEORIES: SCHEMAS THAT SHAPE FIRST IMPRESSIONS

- **Implicit personality theories:** Beliefs about what traits or characteristics tend to go together.
- One such belief is that birth order might be related to various traits or even occupation.
- Implicit personality theories are strongly shaped by culture.
- Beliefs and expectations are often self-fulfilling, at least to a degree.
- We can form impressions of others that reflect our implicit beliefs more than their actual traits.

## IMPRESSION FORMATION

- **Impression formation:** The process through which we form impressions of others.
- We form impressions of others on the basis of a kind of ‘cognitive algebra’. Despite the fact that some traits may be more important than others, the process largely involves a cognitive averaging of information.
- Impressions of others involve two components: exemplars of traits or behaviour, and abstractions of traits or behaviour. When people make judgements about others, they recall examples of their behaviour and base their judgements on these two factors.
- Initially, our impressions are based on exemplars (concrete examples of their behaviour), but, as we get to know a person better, abstractions of their overall behaviour is our dominant impression.

## IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT: TACTICS FOR “LOOKING GOOD” TO OTHERS

- **Impression management/self-presentation:** Efforts to make a good impression on others.
- Two categories of techniques for boosting image:
  - **Self-enhancement:** Efforts to increase your appeal to others
  - **Other-enhancement:** Efforts to make the target person feel good in various ways.
- Self-enhancement includes efforts to boost one’s appearance – either physical or professional – and efforts to appear more competent and accomplished.
- Other-enhancement includes ingratiation, or any other tactic used to induce positive moods and reactions in others.

## DOES IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT WORK? DOES IT REALLY BOOST IMPRESSIONS OF THE PEOPLE USING IT?

- Impression management works if used with care.
- People who use impression management tactics successfully may be higher in social skills than people who don’t.

- While effective use of impression management tactics did increase ratings by interviewers, they were only weakly related to later ratings of actual job performance.
- If impression management is overused, or used ineffectively, it can backfire and produce negative rather than positive reactions from others.
- **Slime effect**: tendency to form very negative impressions of others who play up to their superiors but treat subordinates with disdain and contempt.
- The use of too many different tactics of impression management (especially, too much flattery) can lead to suspicion and mistrust.

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#### WHY DO PEOPLE ENGAGE IN IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT?

- Primary reason: to enhance others' reactions to them.
- Efforts at impression management may serve to boost the moods of people who engage in it. By attempting to appear happy and positive, people may actually encourage such feelings.

# 4: THE SELF: ANSWERING THE QUESTION “WHO AM I”

## SU 4.1. SELF-PRESENTATION: MANAGING THE SELF IN DIFFERENT SOCIAL CONTEXTS

### SELF-OTHER ACCURACY IN PREDICTING OUR BEHAVIOUR

- Research suggests that having access to our intentions, which observers don't have, is one reason why we are sometimes inaccurate about ourselves.
- Research also shows that at times, other people seem to “know” us better (can predict our behaviour) better than we ourselves can.
- The “self and other” agreement about what a person is like is higher for Web-based social interactions than for real-world interactions.
- Less socially skilled people find that online interaction welcomes them more than their “real life”. They are also able to better express themselves online.
- Socially skilled individuals are motivated to add friends to enhance their already positive self-view.
- Shy, socially anxious people are able to gain some social skills and social success by going online. Some of these skills are transferred to “real life”.

### SELF-PRESENTATION TACTICS

- **Self-promotion:** attempting to present ourselves to others as having positive attributes.
- **Self-verification perspective:** theory that addresses the processes by which we lead others to agree with our views of ourselves; wanting others to agree with how we see ourselves.
- Research from a self-verification perspective suggests that negotiation occurs with others to ensure they agree with our self-claims.
- Even if it means potentially receiving information that is negative about ourselves, we may still wish to have other people see us as we see ourselves.
- We prefer to be with people who verify our view of ourselves (within limits).
- We can also create a favourable self-presentation by conveying our positive regard or respect for others.
- **Ingratiation tactics:** When we try to make others like us by conveying that we like them; praising others to flatter them. If ingratiation tactics are overdone, people will suspect insincerity.
- **Self-deprecating:** putting ourselves down or implying that we are not as good as someone else. Self-depreciation can be used to communicate admiration or to simply lower the audience's expectations of our abilities.
- Our self-representations are often dishonest.

## SU 4.2. SELF-KNOWLEDGE: HOW DO WE KNOW WHO WE ARE?

### INTROSPECTION: LOOKING INWARD TO DISCOVER THE CAUSES OF OUR OWN BEHAVIOUR

- **Introspection:** to privately contemplate “who we are”. It is a method for attempting to gain self-knowledge.
- Because we often genuinely don’t know why we feel a particular way, generating reasons (which might well be inaccurate) could cause us to arrive at false conclusions. Thinking about reasons for our actions can misdirect our quest for self-knowledge when our behaviour is really driven by our feelings.
- When trying to predict our future feelings in response to some event, we are not very successful. We often think we will feel much worse than we actually will in response to a negative future event. We forget to factor in the things that make us happy. Likewise for a positive future event – we don’t factor in the things that make us unhappy.
- People are happier when spending money on others, even though they predict that they’ll be happier spending money on themselves.

### THE SELF FROM THE OTHER’S STANDPOINT

- One way that we can attempt to learn about ourselves is by taking an “observer” perspective on our own past.
- Observers and actors differ in their focus of attention, and observers are less likely to be swayed by knowing our intentions and so forth.
- Observers tend to attribute more dispositional causes, and actors attribute situational causes for their behaviour.

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### GAINING ACCURATE SELF KNOWLEDGE

- Research shows that when we try to learn about the self from the vantage point of another, we are more likely to see ourselves as observers do – in terms of consistent behavioural tendencies.
- One way to gain self-insight is to try to see ourselves as others do.
- When the behaviour in question is based on a conscious decision-making process – and is not based on unconscious emotional factors – thinking about those reasons might lead to accurate self-judgements.
- When we fail to take into account factors that really do influence how we feel, introspection is unlikely to lead to accurate self-inferences.

## SU 4.3. THINKING ABOUT THE SELF: PERSONAL VERSUS SOCIAL IDENTITY

- **Social identity theory**: Addresses how we respond when our group identity is salient. Suggests that we will move closer to positive others with whom we share an identity but distance from other ingroup members who perform poorly or otherwise make our social identity negative.
- **Personal-versus-social identity continuum**: At the personal level, the self is thought of as a unique individual, whereas at the social identity level, the self is seen as a member of a group.
- **Salience**: When someone or some object stands out from its background or is the focus of attention.
- **Intragroup comparisons**: Judgements that result from comparisons between individuals who are members of the same group.
- **Intergroup comparisons**: Judgements that result from comparisons between our group and another group.
- According to social identity theory, we can perceive ourselves differently at any given moment in time, depending on where we are on the personal-versus-social identity continuum. This momentary salience – the part of our identity that is the focus of our attention – can influence how we perceive ourselves and respond to others.
- When our personal identity is salient, this results in self-descriptions that emphasize how we differ from others. Personal identity self-description can be thought of as an intragroup comparison. Which group is the referent can affect the content of our self-descriptions.
- When our social identity is salient, this results in self-descriptions that emphasize what we share with other group members. Social identity self-description can be thought of as an intergroup comparison.
- Most of us are members of a variety of different groups (e.g. gender group, occupation, age group, sexual orientation, nationality, sports team).

## WHO I THINK I AM DEPENDS ON THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

- People describe themselves differently depending on whether the question they are asked implies a specific situation or is more open-ended.
- People differ across time and place in the extent to which they emphasize the personal self and its uniqueness from others. Individualism is being increasingly emphasized, particularly by Americans.
- Important differences in self-descriptions emerge primarily when a particular group identity is activated.
- Context shifts in self-definition can influence how we categorize ourselves in relation to other people, and this, in turn, can affect how we respond to others.
- **Self-construal**: How we characterize ourselves, which can vary depending on what identity is salient at any given moment.
- Gender must be salient for gender differences in self-construal to emerge.
- How we perceive ourselves depends on which gender group serves as the comparison.

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## WHEN AND WHY ARE SOME ASPECTS OF THE SELF MORE SALIENT THAN OTHERS?

- One aspect of the self might be especially relevant to a particular context.
- Features of the context can make one aspect of the self highly distinctive, with that aspect of identity forming the basis of self-perception.
- Some people may be more ready to categorize themselves in terms of a particular personal trait (e.g. intelligence) or social identity (e.g. gender) because of its importance to the self.
- Other people, including how they refer to us linguistically, can cue us to think of ourselves in personal versus social identity terms. Aspects of the self-concept that are referred to as nouns are particularly likely to activate social identities. Aspects that are referred to with either adjectives or verbs (e.g. athletic, taller, extremely supportive) reference perceived differences between people within a category and are especially likely to elicit self-perceptions at the personal identity level.

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## EMOTIONAL CONSEQUENCES WHEN CHOICES ARE MADE BY DIFFERENT SELVES

- The aspect of ourselves that is salient can affect our choices.
- Later, when a different aspect of ourselves is salient, we may regret our choices.

## WHO I AM DEPENDS ON OTHERS' TREATMENT

- How others treat us, and how we believe they will treat us in the future, have important implications for how we think about ourselves.
- We could choose to change an aspect of ourselves that causes others to reject us, or to simply change that aspect when we anticipate being in the presence of others who will reject us because of it. We could also rebel against those who reject us, by making this feature more prominent.
- How we dress and alter our bodies can be conceptualized as important identity markers.
- An expectation of rejection and devaluation on the part of the culture as a whole can result in increasingly strong identification with a newly forming cultural group.

## THE SELF ACROSS TIME: PAST AND FUTURE SELVES

- **Autobiographical memory**: Concerned with memory of the ourselves in the past, sometimes over the life course as a whole.
- By comparing our present selves with our past selves, we feel good about ourselves to the extent that we perceive improvement over time.
- Criticism of the “distant” past self is usually greater than the “nearer” past self. This allows us to feel that we’ve “grown”.
- Thinking about a positively valued possible self can inspire people to forego current activities that are enjoyable but will not help, or might even hinder, bringing about this improved future self.

- Role models can inspire us to invest in long-term achievements, but we must see the possible self that the role model represents as being potentially attainable.
- People also consider how to avoid negative and feared possible selves. Envisioning the self-changes required to avoid these outcomes can induce feelings of control and optimism.
- **Self-efficacy**: the belief that one can achieve a goal as a result of one's own actions.
- Positive self-change is enhanced by feelings of self-efficacy. People high in self-efficacy usually prefer to allocate their time and efforts to tasks that can be solved. They stop working on tasks that cannot be solved more quickly than people low in self-efficacy.
- Self-efficacy can be seen as a special case of self-evaluation or self-esteem.
- Three main sources of information come into play when self-evaluation perceptions are formed:
  1. Exposure to authentic or 'first hand' information about ourselves might have an important effect.
  2. Social comparison – when people compare themselves with another.
  3. Perceptions of how others evaluate us can have an effect on our self-evaluations.
- Generally, people actively pursue positive feedback from others. Negative feedback might be detrimental to our self-evaluations.

### SELF-CONTROL: WHY IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO DO

- Some researchers suggest that the act of controlling ourselves is taxing and makes exercising subsequent self-control more difficult.
- Vohs and Heatherton claim that we have a limited ability to regulate ourselves, and if we use our control resources on unimportant tasks, there will be less available for the important ones.
- **Ego-depletion**: The lowered capacity to exert subsequent self-control following earlier efforts to exert self-control. Performance decrements are typically observed when people's ego strength has been depleted by prior efforts at self-control.
- Ego depletion might be expected in many domains requiring self-regulation.
- Prior efforts to exert self-control has negative consequences for subsequent self-control, and lowered blood glucose levels.
- Self-control can be increased by reminding ourselves of our overall goals and plan.

### SU 4.4. SELF-ESTEEM: ATTITUDES TOWARD OURSELVES

- **Self-esteem**: The degree to which we perceive ourselves positively or negatively; our overall attitude toward ourselves. It can be measured explicitly or implicitly.
- **Implicit self-esteem**: Feelings about the self of which we are not consciously aware.

### THE MEASUREMENT OF SELF-ESTEEM

- **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale**: the most common method of measuring personal self-esteem. People are asked to provide their own explicit attitude toward themselves.
- People's self-esteem seems to be responsive to life events. When we reflect on achievements, our self-esteem increases, and vice versa.

- Self-esteem scores based on explicit measures such as the Rosenberg scale could be biased by self-presentation concerns.
- The most common of the implicit self-esteem measures assessing self feelings of which we are not consciously aware is the Implicit Associations Test.
- Implicit self-esteem seems susceptible to subliminal conditioning.
- Young adults whose parents were consistently nurturing of them reported higher implicit self-esteem than those whose parents were less nurturing. Young adults whose parents were overprotective of them showed lower implicit self-esteem than those whose parents displayed trust in them during their teenage years.
- For people who have low self-esteem, positive self-talk might remind them that they are not measuring up to important standards.

### IS HIGH SELF-ESTEEM ALWAYS BENEFICIAL?

- High self-esteem may be associated with bullying, narcissism, exhibitionism, self-aggrandizing, and interpersonal aggression.
- To the extent that high self-esteem implies superiority to others, that view of the self may need to be defended with some frequency.
- It is possible that when high self-esteem is coupled with instability, it may result in the most hostility and defensive responding.

### DO MEN AND WOMEN DIFFER IN THEIR LEVELS OF SELF-ESTEEM?

- Self-esteem in females may reflect their devalued status in the larger society; many can end up feeling that they just do not measure up to societal standards.
- When women are excluded from important life arenas, they have worse self-concepts than men.
- Men have reliably higher self-esteem than women.
- The self-esteem difference between genders is less among those in the professional class and greater among those in the middle and lower classes.
- Higher education is associated with better self-esteem in women.
- The overall self-esteem for groups that are devalued in a given society suffers. Perceiving and experiencing discrimination has a significant negative effect on a variety of indicators of physical and psychological wellbeing.

### A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

- Research suggests that self-worth is important for self-esteem in individualistic cultures, while harmony in interpersonal relations is a crucial element of (at least some) collectivistic cultures.
- **Tajfel's social identity theory:** The self-concepts involves two major sub-systems: a personal identity and a social identity. Personal identity refers to our self-descriptions in terms of personal, physical, or intellectual traits. Social identity refers to category descriptions such as race, ethnic group, etc. The theory also suggests that people usually strive for higher self-esteem and positive identities.

## SU 4.5. SOCIAL COMPARISON: HOW WE EVALUATE OURSELVES

- Social psychologists believe that all human judgement is relative to some comparison standard.
- **Downward social comparison:** A comparison of the self to another who does less well than or is inferior to us.
- **Upward social comparison:** A comparison of the self to another who does better than us or who is superior to us.
- **Social comparison theory:** Festinger suggested that people compare themselves to others because for many domains and attributes there is no objective yardstick to evaluate ourselves against, and other people are therefore highly informative.
- In general, the desire to see ourselves positively is stronger than either the desire to accurately assess ourselves or to verify strongly held beliefs about ourselves.
- Often, by using comparisons with others who share a social category with us, we can judge ourselves more positively. Self-judgements are often less negative when the standards of our ingroup are used.
- Some suggest that the goal of perceiving the self positively is the “master motive” of human beings.
- **Self-evaluation maintenance model:** This perspective suggests that to maintain a positive view of ourselves, we distance ourselves from others who perform better than we do on valued dimensions and move closer to others who perform worse than us. This view suggests that doing so will protect our self-esteem.
- Self-evaluation maintenance applies when we categorize the self at the personal level and we compare ourselves as an individual to another individual.
- Social identity theory applies when we categorize ourselves at the group level and the comparison other is categorized as sharing the same category as ourselves.
- When the context encourages comparison at the group level, the same person will be responded to differently than when the context suggests a comparison between individuals.

## SELF-SERVING BIASES AND UNREALISTIC OPTIMISM

- **Above average effect:** The tendency for people to rate themselves as above the average on most positive social attributes.
- Many of us show the above average effect. This tendency predicts increases in self-esteem across time.
- We easily remember and emphasize instances that prove our favoured self-perceptions.
- Not only do people show self-serving biases for their personal outcomes, but they do so also for their group’s achievements.
- We are unrealistically optimistic – we see our chances for success in life as slightly higher than our peers’ chances.

- Higher motivation and greater persistence are associated with unrealistic optimism – and these lead to higher levels of performance on average and greater feelings of satisfaction.
- Unrealistic optimism appears to be generally adaptive.
- Very high levels of optimism in management is associated with poorer business outcomes.

## SU 4.6. THE SELF AS TARGET OF PREJUDICE

### EMOTIONAL CONSEQUENCES: HOW WELL-BEING CAN SUFFER

- The worst possible attribution for psychological well-being is when the outcome is attributed to an aspect of yourself that you perceive as unchangeable. The next, slightly better attribution that can be made is an attribution to prejudice.
- What is fundamentally important is how likely it is that you can expect to encounter discriminatory treatment in the future.
- True external attributions, which could reflect both stable and unstable causes, are the most likely to protect the attributor's self and well-being.
- Sandra Bem suggested that four sex- or gender-typed individuals can be distinguished. Individuals who are high on the masculinity dimension and low on femininity are masculine, while those high on femininity and low on masculinity are feminine. Those high on both masculinity and femininity were typed as androgynous, while those low on masculinity and femininity are undifferentiated.
- Research suggests a relationship between gender identity and well-being and more specifically, that a relationship between androgyny and general well-being can, to a large extent, be ascribed to the masculine component of androgyny.
- In Spangenberg and Lategan's study, androgynous females not only displayed significantly better coping abilities than the feminine and the undifferentiated sex-role types, but had better coping abilities than the masculine group as well. Although the coping abilities of the androgynous males were better than those of the masculine males, the difference was not significant. These two groups, however, had significantly better coping abilities than the undifferentiated group.
- Commenting on their results regarding women, Spangenberg and Lategan remarked that an overemphasis of feminine characteristics, such as gentleness, submissiveness, and compliance, can be seen as undesirable during child-rearing. They regard it as important for young girls to acquire masculine characteristics, such as assertiveness and self-reliance. Androgynous women will be in a better position to cope with contemporary demands to be both professionals and homemakers simultaneously.

### COGNITIVE CONSEQUENCES

- One cognitive consequence of perceived prejudice is that when people fear that others will discover their devalued group membership, this fear and accompanying cognitive distractions might interfere with their ability to learn or to acquire new skills.

- Cognitive deficits stemming from concerns about one's social identity are only found when it is an identity devalued by the larger culture.
- It is basically the extent to which a negative stereotype defines an individual's entire worth that leads to underperformance.

## BEHAVIOURAL CONSEQUENCES: STEREOTYPE THREAT EFFECTS ON PERFORMANCE

- **Stereotype threat:** Can occur when people believe that they might be judged in light of a negative stereotype about their group or that, because of their performance, they may in some way confirm a negative stereotype of their group.
- Perceived prejudice not only affects psychological well-being; it can also interfere with our ability to acquire new skills.
- Another important way that underperformance effects may be overcome is by making salient the stereotype-defying accomplishments of an important role model who shares one's stigmatized group membership.
- When those who are vulnerable to stereotype threat are reminded in either an overt or subtle way that the stereotype might apply to them, then performance in that domain can be undermined.
- When people value their identities in more than one group, but some stereotyped characteristics of one group are incompatible with those of the other group, they may disidentify from the aspects that cause the threat condition.
- Anxiety plays a crucial role in stereotype threat effects.
- Stereotype threat effects can also occur among dominant group members as long as their group is expected to perform less favourably than the comparison group.

# 5: ATTITUDES: EVALUATING AND RESPONDING TO THE SOCIAL WORLD

- **Attitude:** evaluation of the various aspects of the social world.
- **Explicit attitudes:** consciously accessible attitudes that are controllable and easy to report.
- **Implicit attitudes:** unconscious associations between objects and evaluative responses.
- Even when we do not have strong attitudes toward a specific issue, related values can influence what attitudes we form.
- Responding to a stimulus in terms of our attitudes – on an immediately evaluative basis – produces different brain wave activity than when a response is made on a non-evaluative basis.
- Attitudes can influence our thoughts.
- **Implicit Association Test:** a method for assessing someone's implicit attitudes. The IAT is based on the fact that we may associate various social objects more or less readily with positive or negative descriptive words.
- The IAT may be guilty of assessing familiarity with the culture rather than an individual's actual attitudes. It is also susceptible to deliberate faking.

## SU 5.1. ATTITUDE FORMATION: HOW ATTITUDES DEVELOP

- **Social learning:** the process through which we acquire new information, forms of behaviour, or attitudes from other people.

## CLASSICAL CONDITIONING: LEARNING BASED ON ASSOCIATION

- **Classical conditioning:** a basic form of learning in which one stimulus, initially neutral, acquires the capacity to evoke reactions through repeated pairing with another stimulus. In a sense, one stimulus becomes a signal for the presentation or occurrence of the other.
- **Unconditioned stimulus:** a stimulus that evokes a positive or negative response without substantial learning.
- **Conditioned stimulus:** the stimulus that comes to stand for or signal a prior conditioned stimulus.
- Classical conditioning can affect attitudes via two pathways:
  - **The direct route:** the more generally effective and typical method used. Can be seen in advertising. Positive stimuli are repeatedly paired with the product, with the aim being to directly transfer the affect felt toward them to the brand.

- **The indirect route:** by pairing a specific celebrity endorser who is already liked by the target audience with the new brand, a memory link between the two can be established. Following repeatedly presenting that celebrity with the product, whenever that celebrity is thought of, the product too will come to mind.
- Classical conditioning contributes to shaping our attitudes, even if we are not aware of the stimuli that serve as the basis for this kind of conditioning.
- Findings suggest that attitudes can be influenced by subliminal conditioning – classical conditioning that occurs in the absence of conscious awareness of the stimuli involved.
- Mere exposure – having seen an object before, but too rapidly to remember having seen it – can result in attitude formation.
- Even when we can remember being exposed to information, its mere repetition creates a sense of familiarity and results in more positive attitudes. (the illusion of truth effect)
- Once formed, attitudes can influence behaviour – even when those attitudes are inconsistent with how we are explicitly expected to behave. Only when threat is absent are attempts to change negative responses effective using explicit norms.

## INSTRUMENTAL CONDITIONING: REWARDS FOR THE “RIGHT” VIEWS

- **Instrumental conditioning:** a basic form of learning in which responses that lead to positive outcomes or which permit avoidance of negative outcomes are strengthened.
- Because of instrumental conditioning, until the teen years most children express views that are highly similar to those of their parents and other family members.
- Social networks can be quite influential – particularly when they introduce new strong arguments not previously encountered. The desire to fit in with others and be rewarded for holding the same attitudes can be a powerful motivator of attitude formation and change.
- When people are aware that different groups they are members of will reward (or punish) them for expressing support for a particular attitude, they may express one view on a topic to one audience and another view to a different audience.
- One way that social psychologists assess the extent to which people’s reported attitudes depend on the expected audience is by varying who might learn of their attitude position.

## OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING: LEARNING BY EXPOSURE TO OTHERS

- **Observational learning:** a basic form of learning in which individuals acquire new forms of behaviour as a result of observing others.
- **Social comparison:** the process through which we compare ourselves to others to determine whether our view of social reality is, or is not, correct.
- **Reference groups:** groups of people with whom we identify and whose opinions we value.
- We often adopt the attitudes that we hear others express, or acquire the behaviours we observe in others, because of the social comparison mechanism.

- We often adjust our attitudes so as to hold views closer to those of our reference groups.
- Not only are people differentially influenced by others' attitude positions depending on how much they identify with those others, they also expect to be influenced by other people's attitude positions differentially depending on how much they identify with those others.

## SU 5.2. WHEN AND WHY DO ATTITUDES INFLUENCE BEHAVIOUR

### ROLE OF THE SOCIAL CONTEXT IN THE LINK BETWEEN ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR

- The social context can directly affect the attitude-behaviour connection.
- Depending on the degree to which the action has social consequences or not, attitudes may be differentially related to behaviour.
- Several factors determine the extent to which attitudes and behaviour correspond, with aspects of the situation influencing the extent to which attitudes determine behaviour. Features of the attitudes themselves are also important. Attitudes that we hold with greater certainty are more strongly linked to behaviour.
- **Pluralistic ignorance:** When we collectively misunderstand what attitudes others hold and believe erroneously that others have different attitudes than us.
- We are more likely to express attitudes that agree with the perceived norm, rather than expressing attitudes that go against the norm, especially if we identify strongly with our group.

### STRENGTH OF ATTITUDES

- Attitudes based on moral conviction can give rise to intense emotion and strongly predict behaviour.
- The term *strength* captures the *extremity* of an attitude, the degree of *certainty* with which it is held, as well as the extent to which the attitude is based on *personal experience* with the attitude object.
- These three factors can affect attitude *accessibility* (how easily the attitude comes to mind in various situations), which ultimately determines the extent to which attitudes drive behaviour.

### ATTITUDE EXTREMITY: ROLE OF VESTED INTERESTS

- **Attitude extremity:** the extent to which an individual feels strongly about an issue.
- One of the key determinants of attitude extremity is vested interest – the extent to which the attitude is relevant to the concerns of the individual who holds it. The greater such vested interest, the stronger the impact of the attitude on behaviour.
- People with a vested interest are likely to elaborate on arguments that favour their position.

- Attitudes based on vested interest are more likely to be thought about carefully, be resistant to change, and be an accessible guide for behaviour.
- Vested interests are particularly likely to affect judgements and behaviour in the immediate context, whereas abstract values do so when the judgement or behaviour is in the distant future.

## ATTITUDE CERTAINTY: IMPORTANCE OF CLARITY AND CORRECTNESS

- Two important components of **attitude certainty**:
  - **Attitude clarity**: being clear about what one's attitude is.
  - **Attitude correctness**: feeling one's attitude is the valid or the proper one to hold.
- When a person learns that others share one's attitudes, it acts as justification for that attitude and thereby increases certainty.
- The more often you are asked to report on your attitude, the more it will facilitate clarity and thereby certainty.
- Both components of attitude certainty, when they are high, can increase resistance to a persuasive message – each independently contributes to resistance to persuasion.
- High clarity will be more predictive of behaviour in private but not public contexts – where correctness concerns are likely to be greater.
- When people's attitudes are attacked, successfully resisting those attacks may increase perceptions of attitude certainty because mounting and expressing counterarguments will increase perceptions of attitude correctness.
- An attitude that is high on both clarity and correctness is most likely to reliably predict behaviour in public and in private.

## ROLES OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

- Attitudes formed on the basis of direct experience with the object about which we hold a particular attitude can exert stronger effects on behaviour than ones formed indirectly.
- Attitudes based on personal relevance are more likely to be elaborated on in terms of supporting arguments, and this makes them resistant to change.
- Personal experience is one way to create involvement with an issue, and people who are more involved with an issue and whose values are linked with that issue are more likely to act on their attitudes.

## SU 5.3. HOW ATTITUDES GUIDE BEHAVIOUR

### ATTITUDES ARRIVED AT THROUGH REASONED THOUGHT

- **Theory of reasoned action**: a theory suggesting that the decision to engage in a particular behaviour is the result of a rational process in which behavioural options are considered, consequences or outcomes of each are evaluated, and a decision is reached to

act or not to act. That decision is then reflected in behavioural intentions, which strongly influence overt behaviour.

- **Theory of planned behaviour:** an extension of the theory of reasoned action, suggesting that in addition to attitudes toward a given behaviour and subjective norms about it, individuals also consider their ability to perform the behaviour.
- For a number of behavioural domains, intentions are moderately correlated with behaviour.
- The intention-behaviour relationship is even stronger when people have formed an effective implementation plan.
- Intentions are determined by two factors:
  - Attitudes toward the behaviour – people’s positive/negative evaluations of performing the behaviour
  - Subjective norms – people’s perceptions of whether others will approve/disapprove of this behaviour
  - A third factor, perceived behavioural control, was later added to the theory.

## ATTITUDES AND SPONTANEOUS BEHAVIOURAL REACTIONS

- **Attitude-to-behaviour process model:** a model of how attitudes guide behaviour that emphasizes the influence of attitudes and stored knowledge of what is appropriate in a given situation on an individual’s definition of the present situation. This, in turn, influences overt behaviour.
- When we have time to engage in careful, reasoned thought, we can weigh all the alternatives and decide how we will act.
- Under the hectic conditions of everyday life, we often don’t have time for the deliberate weighing of alternatives, and often people’s responses appear to be much faster than such deliberate thought processes can count for. In such cases, our attitudes spontaneously shape our perceptions of various events, thereby shaping our immediate behavioural reactions.
- **Habit:** repeatedly performing a specific behaviour so responses become relatively automatic whenever that situation is encountered.
- The combined (reasoned action and planned behaviour) model suggests that behavioural intentions determine eventual behaviour. Behavioural intentions, in turn, are determined by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. But while attitudes and subjective norms only influence behavioural intentions, perceived behavioural control directly determines intentions and behaviour. Attitudes sometimes have a more important effect on behavioural intentions, while on other occasions subjective norms may be more important. Thus, behavioural intentions can be either attitude driven or normative driven.
- The stronger the intention, the greater the likelihood of the behaviour. Among some populations, where the individuals are subjected to greater peer pressure, the influence of the subjective norm on behavioural intention is greater than that of attitudes. Among more independently functioning communities, attitudes are often the stronger determinant.

- One study showed that behavioural intentions and behaviour itself are determined by other factors than attitudes.

## SU 5.4. THE FINE ART OF PERSUASION: HOW ATTITUDES ARE CHANGED

- **Persuasion:** efforts to change others' attitudes through the use of various kinds of messages.

### PERSUASION: COMMUNICATORS, MESSAGES, AND AUDIENCES

- **Early research:** Some *source* directs some type of *message* to some person/group (*audience*).
- **Later research:** *Who* says *what* to *whom* with what effect?
- Communicators who are credible are more persuasive than those seen as lacking in expertise. Communicators are seen as most credible when they are perceived as arguing against their self-interests.
- Communicators who are physically attractive are more persuasive than communicators who are not attractive. We are also more likely to be persuaded by a communicator we like than one we dislike.
- Messages that don't appear to be designed to change our attitudes are often more successful than those that seem to be designed to achieve this goal. Knowing that a sales pitch is coming, undermines its persuasiveness.
- **Fear appeals:** messages that are intended to arouse fear in the recipient. When the message is sufficiently fear arousing that people feel genuinely threatened, they are likely to argue against the threat, or dismiss its applicability to themselves. Recent research shows that fear persuasion is not generally effective at changing people's health-related behaviours.
- If people do not know how to change, or do not believe that they can succeed in doing so, fear will do little except induce avoidance and defence responses.
- Health messages are more effective if they are framed in a positive manner.
- Positive framing can be effective in inducing change – especially when individuals fail to perceive themselves as especially at risk.

### THE COGNITIVE PROCESSES UNDERLYING PERSUASION

- The first type of processing we can employ is known as **systematic processing or the central route to persuasion**, and it involves careful consideration of message content and the ideas it contains.
- The second approach, known as **heuristic processing or the peripheral route to persuasion**, involves the use of mental shortcuts (simple rules of thumb). This allows us to react to persuasive messages in an automatic manner.

- **Elaboration-likelihood model:** a theory suggesting that persuasion can occur in either of two distinct ways, differing in the amount of cognitive effort or elaboration the message receives.
- We engage in the most effortful and systematic processing when our motivation and capacity to process information relating to the persuasive message is high. This type of processing occurs if we have a lot of knowledge about the topic, we have a lot of time to engage in careful thought, or the issue is sufficiently important to us and we believe it is essential to form an accurate view.
- We engage in the type of processing that requires less effort (heuristic processing) when we lack the ability or capacity to process more carefully or when our motivation to perform such cognitive work is low. It is often easier for persuaders to change our attitudes when we think in this mode.
- In low-distraction conditions, those who have consumed caffeine agree more with the message than those who received a caffeine-free placebo. When people are distracted and systematic processing of the message content is impossible, there is no difference in the attitudes of those who consumed caffeine and those who did not.
- When persuasive messages are not interesting or relevant to individuals, the degree of persuasion they produce is not strongly influenced by the strength of the arguments these messages contain. When such messages are highly relevant to individuals, however, they are much more successful in inducing persuasion when the arguments they contain are strong and convincing. When relevance is low, individuals tend to process messages through the heuristic mode.
- People can be more easily persuaded when they are distracted than when they are not, because their capacity to process the information is limited, so they adopt the heuristic mode.

## SU 5.5. RESISTING PERSUASION ATTEMPTS

- South African research results illustrated that intergroup attitudes, generally, do not change easily over the long term.

### REACTANCE: PROTECTING OUR PERSONAL FREEDOM

- **Reactance:** negative reactions to threats to one's personal freedom. Reactance often increases resistance to persuasion and can even produce negative attitude change or opposite to what was intended.
- When individuals perceive hard-sell attempts as direct threats to their personal freedom (or their image of being an independent person), they are strongly motivated to resist.

### FOREWARNING: PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF PERSUASIVE INTENT

- **Forewarning:** advance knowledge that one is about to become the target of an attempt at persuasion. Forewarning often increases resistance to the persuasion that follows.

- Forewarning provides us with more opportunity to formulate counterarguments, and that can lessen the message's impact. It also gives us more time to recall information that may prove useful in refuting the persuasive message.
- Forewarning does not prevent persuasion when people are distracted. In this case, people are no more likely to resist the message than those not forewarned.
- Sometimes forewarnings can encourage attitude shifts toward the position being advocated in a message, but this effect is a temporary response to people's desire to defend their view of themselves as not gullible.

## SELECTIVE AVOIDANCE OF PERSUASION ATTEMPTS

- **Selective avoidance:** a tendency to direct attention away from information that challenge existing attitudes. Such avoidance increases resistance to persuasion.
- The opposite effect occurs as well: when we encounter information that supports our views, we tend to give it our full attention.

## ACTIVELY DEFENDING OUT ATTITUDES: COUNTERARGUING AGAINST THE COMPETITION

- We not only ignore information that is inconsistent with our current views, but we also carefully process counterattitudinal input and argue actively against it. In this way, exposure to arguments opposed to our attitudes can serve to strengthen the views we already hold, making us more resistant to subsequent efforts to change them.

## INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN RESISTANCE TO PERSUASION

- People differ in their vulnerability to persuasion.
- Some people may be resistant because they are motivated to engage in counter-arguing.
- Some people are relatively resistant to persuasion because they attempt to bolster their own beliefs when they encounter counterattitudinal messages.
- The types of thoughts people have when they're confronted with a counterattitudinal message are predicted by their preference for resisting persuasion by either counterarguing or bolstering their initial attitude position.

## EGO-DEPLETION CAN UNDERMINE RESISTANCE

- **Self-regulation:** limited capacity to engage our willpower and control our own thinking and emotions.
- **Ego-depletion:** when our capacity to self-regulate has been reduced because of prior expenditures of limited resources.
- Factors that undermine our ability to engage in self-regulation, could undermine our ability to resist persuasion.
- In a state of ego-depletion, people may simply acquiesce when confronted with a counterattitudinal message.

- Research confirms that those who have resisted a persuasive message have less ability to subsequently exert self-control.
- When we are in the position of attempting to persuade others, we are more likely to be dishonest when our capacity to exert control has been depleted.

## SU 5.6. COGNITIVE DISSONANCE: WHAT IT IS AND HOW DO WE MANAGE IT

- **Cognitive dissonance:** an internal state that results when individuals notice inconsistency between two or more attitudes or between their attitudes and their behaviour.
- Cognitive dissonance can sometimes lead us to change our own attitudes – to shift them so that they are consistent with our overt behaviour, even in the absence of any strong external pressure to do so.

## DISSONANCE AND ATTITUDE CHANGE: THE EFFECTS OF INDUCED COMPLIANCE

- Dissonance will be stronger when we have few reasons for engaging in attitude-discrepant behaviour.
- **Less-leads-to-more effect:** the fact that offering individuals small rewards for engaging in counterattitudinal behaviour often produces more dissonance, and so more attitude change, than offering them larger rewards.
- Large rewards provide a justification for the individual's actions, and can undermine the likelihood that attitude change will occur.

## ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES FOR RESOLVING DISSONANCE

- In addition to changing our attitudes, we can also alter our behaviour so that it is more consistent with our attitudes.
- We can also acquire new information (justifications) that supports our behaviour.
- We can also engage in trivialization – concluding that either the attitudes or behaviours in question are not important so any inconsistency between them is of no importance.
- All of the above mentioned methods are direct methods of dissonance reduction – they focus on the attitude-behaviour discrepancy that is causing the dissonance.
- Indirect methods of dissonance reduction: individuals experiencing dissonance may not focus so much on reducing the gap between their attitudes and behaviour, but instead on other methods that will allow them to feel good about themselves despite the gap.
- **Self-affirmation:** restoring positive self-evaluations that are threatened by the dissonance.

## WHEN DISSONANCE IS A TOOL FOR BENEFICIAL CHANGES IN BEHAVIOUR

- **Hypocrisy:** publicly advocating some attitudes or behaviour and then acting in a way that is inconsistent with these attitudes or behaviour.
- Dissonance can be used to promote beneficial behavioural changes, especially when it is used to generate feelings of hypocrisy. Such feelings might be sufficiently intense that only actions that reduce dissonance directly, by inducing behavioural change, may be effective.
- For maximum effectiveness, such procedures must involve several elements:
  - People must publicly advocate the desired behaviours
  - They need to be induced to think about their own behavioural failures in the past
  - They must be given access to direct means for reducing their dissonance.

# 6: STEREOTYPING, PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION: THE CAUSES, EFFECTS AND CURES

- **Prejudice:** Negative emotional responses based on group membership.
- **Discrimination:** differential (usually negative) behaviours directed toward members of different social groups.
- Traditionally, South African social psychologists used to regard South African Whites as the majority group. Following the socio-political changes of the past decade, there is no longer agreement about which group now constitutes the real majority group in South Africa.

## SU 6.1. HOW MEMBERS OF DIFFERENT GROUPS PERCEIVE INEQUALITY

- There are substantial group differences in the perceived legitimacy of prejudice and discrimination, and in how much progress is thought to have been made toward their reduction, depending on whether one is a member of the group targeted or the group perpetrating the unequal treatment.
- High-status groups often perceive the status differential that favours them as less than members of lower-status groups.
- **Risk averse:** we weigh possible losses more heavily than equivalent potential gains. As a result, we respond more negatively to changes that are framed as potential losses than positively to changes that are framed as potential gains.
- Hate crimes increase as minorities are perceived as gaining political power.
- Among white South Africans, support for affirmative action for black South Africans depends on the extent to which they are perceived as a threat to white South Africans' high-status jobs and access to good housing.
- The presence of "token minorities" or women in highly visible positions can lead majority group members to believe that not only has substantial change occurred, but that there is less need for further social change.

## SU 6.2. THE NATURE AND ORIGINS OF STEREOTYPING

- **Stereotypes:** Beliefs about social groups in terms of the traits or characteristics that they are believed to share. Stereotypes are cognitive frameworks that influence the processing of social information.

## STEREOTYPING: BELIEFS ABOUT SOCIAL GROUPS

- Stereotypes about groups are the beliefs and expectations that we have concerning what members of those groups are like.
- **Gender stereotypes:** Stereotypes concerning the traits possessed by females and males and that distinguish the two genders from each other.
- Women are viewed as warm, but not very competent. Men are viewed as high in competence but low on communal attributes.
- Women's traits make them seem appropriate for "support roles" rather than "leadership roles".

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#### STEREOTYPES AND THE "GLASS CEILING"

- **Glass ceiling:** Barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified females from advancing to top-level positions.
- Despite some gains for women in politics, in corporate settings women are primarily making it into middle management but not the higher echelons.
- The stereotypical attributions of the "typical women" are not compatible with the stereotypical attributes of the "typical manager".
- Gender stereotyping in workplace contexts is weakening.
- Women are increasingly being perceived as just as competent as men in political leadership roles.
- Even when women do break through the glass ceiling, they experience less favourable outcomes in their careers because of their gender than do men.
- Women in leadership positions receive lower evaluations from subordinates than males, even when they act similarly.
- When women violate stereotypic expectancies concerning warmth and nurturance, and instead act according to the prototype of a leader, particularly in masculine domains, they are likely to face hostility and rejection.

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#### GENDER STEREOTYPES AND THE "GLASS CLIFF"

- **Glass cliff effect:** Choosing women for leadership positions that are risky, precarious, or when the outcome is more likely to result in failure.
- Evidence suggests that women are more likely to gain high-status positions during times of crisis. It appears that when men's stereotypic leadership attributes appear not to be working because the organization that has been historically led by men is on a downhill trend, then, and only then, are women with their presumed stereotypic communal attributes seen as suitable for leadership.
- **Objectification of females:** Regarding them as mere bodies that exist for the pleasure of others.

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#### CONSEQUENCES OF TOKEN WOMEN IN HIGH PLACES

- **Tokenism:** Tokenism can refer to hiring based on group membership. It can concern a numerically infrequent presence of members of a particular category or it can refer to instances where individuals perform trivial positive actions for

members of out-groups that are later used as an excuse for refusing more meaningful beneficial actions for members of these groups.

- Token women in high places may perpetuate the false belief that gender no longer matters. Those women who do not achieve success may be led to believe that they only have themselves to blame.
- Evidence shows that tokenism can be a highly effective strategy for deterring collective protest in disadvantaged groups.
- Token conditions – to the same degree as when there is equal gender representation – encourages women to maintain their faith that they can move up and engenders allegiance to organizations where they are substantially underrepresented.
- People who are hired as token representatives of their groups are perceived quite negatively by other members of the organization.
- When women were told that they were selected to lead a group in order to fulfil a quota, their performance was undermined.
- Performing trivial positive actions for the targets of prejudice can serve as an excuse or justification for later discriminatory treatment – prior positive actions serve as a credential that indicates their “non-prejudiced” identity.

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#### RESPONSES TO THOSE WHO SPEAK OUT ABOUT DISCRIMINATION

- Complaining about unjust circumstances can draw people’s attention to undesirable conditions and can ultimately bring about improved future outcomes. However, it can also be construed as attempting to escape personal responsibility.
- Research suggests that even when we as observers think that another person’s negative outcome is not that person’s fault, we have a negative impression when that individual does not accept responsibility for the outcome and instead attributes it (accurately) to discrimination.
- Members of the complainer’s own ingroup may disapprove of discrimination claimers, when they believe it would suggest to outgroup members that the ingroup is given to unjustified griping.
- Only when the complainer’s ingroup believes that the complaint is appropriate because discrimination is serious and that complaining is likely to improve the situation of the group as a whole are they likely to support a fellow ingroup member who complains about discriminatory treatment.

#### IS STEREOTYPING ABSENT IF MEMBERS OF DIFFERENT GROUPS ARE RATED THE SAME?

- **Shifting standards:** When we use one group as the standard but shift to use another group as the comparison standard when judging members of a different group.

- People use different standards – but the same words – to describe different objects (large cat, large car).
- **Objective scales:** Those with measurement units that are tied to external reality so that they mean the same thing regardless of category membership (e.g. dollars earned, feet and inches, chosen or rejected).
- **Subjective scales:** Response scales that are open to interpretation and lack an externally grounded referent, including scales labelled from good to bad or weak to strong. They are said to be subjective because they can take on different meanings depending on the group membership of the person being evaluated.
- The use of subjective rating scales can conceal the presence of stereotypical judgements, whereas use of objective scales tends to expose them.

## CAN WE BE VICTIMS OF STEREOTYPING AND NOT EVEN RECOGNIZE IT? THE CASE OF SINGLE PEOPLE

- **Singlism:** Negative stereotyping and discrimination directed toward people who are single.
- Married people are described in more positive terms than single people.
- There are a variety of legal privileges that come with married status.
- Singlism doesn't seem to be noticed by single people.
- Research supports the idea that discrimination against single people is seen – by both single and married people – as more legitimate than any of these other forms of discrimination.
- DePaulo and Morris suggest that negative stereotyping and discrimination against singles serve to protect and glorify marriage, and this is a central reason why it is so widespread and heavily legitimized.

## WHY DO PEOPLE FORM AND USE STEREOTYPES?

- Stereotypes often function as schemas, which are cognitive frameworks for organizing, interpreting, and recalling information.
- In addition to providing us with a sense that we can predict others' behaviour, stereotypes help us feel positive about our own group identity in comparison to other social groups.

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### STEREOTYPES: HOW THEY OPERATE

- Stereotypes provide us with information about the typical traits possessed by people belonging to certain groups and, once activated, these traits seem to come automatically to mind.
- Information relevant to an activated stereotype is often processed more quickly, and remembered better, than information unrelated to it.
- Stereotypes lead us to pay attention to specific types of information – usually, information consistent with our stereotypes.

- When we encounter someone who belongs to a group about whom we have a stereotype, and this person does not seem to fit the stereotype, we do not necessarily alter our stereotype about what is typical of members of that group. Rather, we place such people into a special category or subtype consisting of people who do not confirm the schema or stereotype, in order to protect the stereotype of the group as a whole.

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#### DO STEREOTYPES EVER CHANGE?

- Theorists suggest that stereotyping will be stable as long as the nature of the intergroup relationship that exists between those groups is stable.
- Stereotype change occurs when the relations between the groups change (so the behaviours we observe change accordingly).

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#### A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

- In South African culture, sex and gender stereotypes still seem to be very deeply embedded.
- In one study, white South African respondents tended to define masculinity in terms of an absence of emotional traits, while black respondents tended to define it more in terms of dominance. Femininity was defined by Blacks more in terms of outwardly visible traits, while Whites defined it in terms of inner sensitivity.
- During a series of workshops on sexually transmitted diseases in Mpumalanga, it emerged that there are instances where men use gang rape as punishment for women who step out of their traditional roles. There are also instances where girls who break away from established roles are gang raped. Some women who attended the workshop condoned gang rape as a disciplinary measure. They believed that women who misbehave should get punished.
- One study (1963) found that the three most frequently endorsed stereotypes regarding Coloureds were musical, gay/happy, and alcoholic. The most frequently endorsed stereotypes regarding Indians were dishonest and intelligent. Urban Blacks were described as happy, backward, and simple. Black and Indian respondents described English-speaking Whites as courteous, hospitable, generous, fashion conscious, and intelligent, and Afrikaans-speaking Whites as cruel, excessively patriotic, politically minded, aggressive, and domineering.
- We sometimes have illusions of out-group homogeneity, which refers to the tendency to perceive members of out-groups as more similar to one another (less variable) than the members of one's own in-group.
- The mirror image of out-group homogeneity is in-group differentiation, where one perceives members of one's own group as showing much larger differences from one another – as being more heterogeneous – than those of other groups.
- Perceptions of out-group homogeneity contribute to a tendency to avoid contact.
- Stereotypes are, in essence, dispositional attributions. We will be tempted to think that individuals belonging to these ostensibly homogeneous groups all possess

inherent (negative) traits about which not much can be done. In-group/out-group distinctions will therefore also remain intact.

## SU 6.3. PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION: FEELINGS AND ACTIONS TOWARD SOCIAL GROUPS

- A person who is prejudiced toward some social group is predisposed to evaluate its members negatively because they belong to that group.
- Whether prejudice will be expressed in overt discrimination or not will depend on the perceived norms or acceptability of doing so.
- Individuals who score higher on measures of prejudice toward a particular group tend to process information about that group differently than individuals who score lower. Information relating to the targets of the prejudice is given more attention than information not relating to them.
- Those who are high in prejudice toward a particular group are very concerned with learning the group membership of a person. This is because they believe the groups have underlying essences.
- **Essence:** typically some biologically based feature that is used to distinguish one group and another; frequently can serve as justification for the differential treatment of those groups.
- We may need to distinguish between prejudices that are associated with specific intergroup emotions including fear, anger, envy, guilt, or disgust. Even when the level of prejudice toward different groups is similar, distinct emotions can form the primary basis of prejudicial responses.
- Depending on what emotion underlies prejudice toward a particular group, the discriminatory actions that might be expected could be rather different.
- Research suggests that inducing some negative emotions can directly lead to discrimination.
- **Minimal groups:** When we are categorized into different groups based on some “minimal” criteria we tend to favour others who are categorized in the same group as ourselves compared to those categorized as members of a different group.
- **Incidental feelings:** Those feelings induced separately or before a target is encountered; as a result, those feelings are irrelevant to the group being judged but can still affect judgements of the target.
- Research suggests that even incidental feelings of anger can generate automatic prejudice toward members of groups to which we do not belong.
- Implicit associations – links between group membership and evaluative responses – can be triggered in a seemingly automatic manner as a result of ingroup and outgroup categorization. Implicit attitudes can influence behaviour.
- Studies show that people’s ability to stop responding in a stereotype-consistent fashion is lower when they drink alcohol compared to when no alcohol is consumed.

## THE ORIGINS OF PREJUDICE: CONTRASTING PERSPECTIVES

- The more important loyalty to one's own in-group is, the greater the support there is for prejudice toward out-groups.

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### THREATS TO SELF-ESTEEM

- People want to see their own group positively (more positively than some other group). When an event threatens people's perceptions of their group's value, they may retaliate by derogating the source of the threat.
- Perceiving a threat to our group may lead us to identify more with our ingroup.
- Research suggests that holding prejudiced views of an outgroup allows group members to bolster their own group's image, particularly when it has been threatened.
- Research shows that simply reminding people who value their ingroup identity that they shared a more inclusive identity with the other group lowered perceived threat and prejudice.

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### COMPETITION FOR RESOURCES AS A SOURCE OF PREJUDICE

- **Zero-sum outcomes:** those that only one person or group can have. So, if one group gets them, the other group can't.
- **Realistic conflict theory:** The view that prejudice stems from direct competition between various social groups over scarce and valued resources.
- As competition escalates, the members of the groups involved will come to view each other in increasingly negative terms.
- Research confirms that competition can intensify conflict, although it may not be the most basic cause of conflict between groups.
- **Superordinate goals:** Those that can only be achieved by cooperation between groups.
- Sherif's research suggests that when groups have to work together to reach superordinate goals, prejudice is reduced.

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### ROLE OF SOCIAL CATEGORIZATION: THE US-VERSUS-THEM EFFECT

- Tajfel's research showed how people could be divided into distinct categories on almost any basis, and doing so could result in different perceptions of, and actions toward, *us* versus *them*.
- Once the social world is divided into "us" and "them", it takes on emotional significance. Some differences are granted social importance and have meaning for our identities. People in the "us" category are viewed in more favourable terms, whereas those in the "them" category are perceived more negatively.
- **Social identity theory:** A theory concerned with the consequences of perceiving ourselves as a member of a social group and identifying with it. Individuals seek

to feel positively about the groups to which they belong, and part of our self-esteem is derived from our social group memberships. Since people who are identified with their group are most likely to express favouritism toward their own group and a corresponding bias against outgroups, valuing our own group will have predictable consequences for justice.

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## A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

- **Relative deprivation:** Perceptions of inequality and feelings of discontent that arise from beliefs that one is getting less than one feels entitled to.
- Feeling relatively worse off than others (relatively deprived) often operates as a strong motivator to change current situations. It can also have a negative effect on self-esteem. People strive towards a positive social identity, and this identity serves as an additional motivator to change undesirable situations.
- There are different types of deprivation, and people can feel deprived in different spheres of life. People also do not feel deprived in isolation. If they do feel deprived, it is in relation to other individuals or groups.
- The three main types of deprivation distinguished are personal in-group deprivation (when people compare themselves with members of their own in-group), personal out-group deprivation (when people compare their own situation with that of individuals and members of the out-group), and in-group/out-group deprivation (when people compare their own group's situation with the position of relevant out-groups).
- The spheres in which people usually feel deprived in are the political, economic, and general social arenas.
- Perceived stability and perceived legitimacy are usually associated with militancy, as well as prejudice.
- Any society or social system can be perceived as either stable or unstable.
- In a stable stratification system, no change in the basic social order is expected.
- If a social system is perceived to be unstable, change is possible. When low-status people feel deprived, they will tend to make changes.
- Perceptions of legitimacy depend on whether the existing social stratification is seen as fair/unfair or just/unjust. Feelings that a society or social order is unfair or unjust will also accentuate feelings of deprivation among low-status groups and, again, people will try to rectify the situation. In general, these two factors always influence the nature and effect of social comparison processes, and the eventual experience of relative deprivation in any society.
- South African deprivation studies illustrate how political, economic, and social fluctuations in our society may – in addition to other, more stable determining factors – influence the perceptions of our positions in society and, eventually, our prejudices in the short and in the long run.
- South African research, investigating the authoritarian personality, shows that certain South African groups are very authoritarian, and that there is a relationship between authoritarianism and prejudice.

- Research conducted by Adorno and his colleagues pointed to the existence of what they called an authoritarian syndrome. It was believed that this personality syndrome caused people to be susceptible to general anti-democratic tendencies.
- Recent South African research links authoritarianism with psychopathology.
- Adorno and his colleagues reasoned that authoritarians come from homes where discipline is usually severe and threatening. Excessively strict and punitive socialisation by parents generates lasting conflict within children, and creates resentment, hostility, and fear towards parents, or other forms of authority. The eventual result is a repression of the hostility, as well as a submission to – and sometimes an idealisation of – authority. The resultant repressed anger and hostility are displaced to out-groups.
- According to Duckitt, norms of prejudice will always determine the general or mean level of prejudice in any particular society. In addition to this, he argues that psychological factors, such as authoritarianism, will account for much of the variation around this mean.

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## DISCRIMINATION

- Subtle or modern racism consists primarily of thinking that the various minority groups are seeking and receiving more benefits than they deserve.
- Subtle or modern racism can be measured by methods based on the principle of priming. One such technique, the bona fide pipeline technique, involves several specific stages. The rationale behind the technique is that (true) attitudes will be revealed by how quickly people react to words. Respondents react faster, for instance, to negative words, after being primed by the face of someone belonging to a group towards whom they are prejudiced. Research indicates that people have implicit attitudes that are automatically triggered, and that these attitudes can influence behaviour.
- When people are confronted with their own group's prejudices they can respond with denial, collective guilt, blaming, the derogation or dehumanising of the victims, or selective memory.

## SU 6.4. WHY PREJUDICE IS NOT INEVITABLE: TECHNIQUES FOR COUNTERING ITS EFFECTS

### ON LEARNING NOT TO HATE

- **Social learning view (of prejudice):** The view that prejudice is acquired through direct and vicarious experiences in much the same manner as other attitudes.
- Children acquire negative attitudes toward various social groups because they hear such views expressed by significant others, and are rewarded for expressing these views themselves.

- Research shows that parental and children's racial attitudes were positively related only among children with relatively high identification with their parents.
- People continue to be socialized in terms of ethnic attitudes beyond childhood. Institutions, which can be moulded to value diversity or prejudice, can exert considerable influence on the adults who identify with them.

## THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF CONTACT

- **Contact hypothesis:** The view that increased contact between members of various social groups can be effective in reducing prejudice between them.
- Increased contact among people from different groups can lead to a growing recognition of similarities between them – which can change the categorizations that people employ.
- Increased contact, or merely having knowledge that other members of our group have such contact with outgroup members, can signal that the norms of the group are not so “anti-outgroup” as individuals might initially have believed.
- Contact should be between participants roughly equal in status; there should be cooperation and interdependence; the participants should be able to know each other as individuals; norms favouring group equality must exist; there should be institutional support; and participants should view each other as typical of the respective groups.
- The fact that the experience of contact is an important variable influencing the effect of contact has been suggested/demonstrated by various South African studies.
- Pettigrew and Tropp proposed that the process underlying the contact's ability to reduce prejudice involves the tendency for familiarity to breed liking. They also suggested that reducing intergroup anxiety (feelings of threat and uncertainty that people experience in intergroup contexts) is imperative in achieving prejudice reductions from contact.

## RECATEGORYZATION: CHANGING THE BOUNDARIES

- **Recategorization:** Shifts in the boundaries between our ingroup and some outgroup. As a result of such recategorization, people formerly viewed as outgroup members may now be viewed as belonging to the ingroup and consequently are viewed more positively.
- **Common ingroup identity model:** A theory suggesting that to the extent individuals in different groups view themselves as members of a single social entity, intergroup bias will be reduced.
- When individuals belonging to initially distinct groups work together toward superordinate goals, they come to perceive themselves as a single social entity. Then, feelings of hostility toward the former outgroup seem to fade away.
- When recategorization is successfully induced, it has proven to be a useful technique for reducing prejudice toward those who were previously categorized as outgroup members.
- As regards the topics of categorisation and recategorization (at a macro- or social level), there are at least two alternative models – the assimilation model and the pluralistic model.
- The basic assumption in the assimilation model is that various groups will eventually assume the character or culture of the dominant group.

- Advocates of a more pluralistic model feel that, although achieving an overall national identity is important, sub-identities need not be lost in the process.

## THE BENEFITS OF GUILT FOR PREJUDICE REDUCTION

- When people are confronted with instances in which they have personally behaved in a prejudiced fashion, it can lead to feelings of guilt for having violated one's personal standards.
- Research shows that people can feel collective guilt based on the actions of other members of their group.
- One study found evidence that feeling collective guilt can reduce racism.

## CAN WE LEARN TO "JUST SAY NO" TO STEREOTYPING AND BIASED ATTRIBUTIONS?

- Research indicates that reliance on stereotypes can be reduced through the process of repeatedly saying no to them.
- People display the fundamental attribution bias, and when applied to groups we see negative behaviours on the part of outgroup members as due to their internal qualities and positive behaviour on the part of outgroup members as situationally (externally) caused.

## SOCIAL INFLUENCE AS A MEANS OF REDUCING PREJUDICE

- Providing people with evidence that members of their own group like members of another group that is typically the target of prejudice can sometimes serve to weaken such negative reactions.
- When stereotypic beliefs are said to be endorsed by the individual's ingroup and that individual's membership in that group is salient, then the in-group's beliefs are more predictive of prejudice than are the individual's personal beliefs about the outgroup.
- The attitudes that individuals hold are influenced not only by their early experience but also by current peer members of their group.

# 7: INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

## SU 7.1. INTERNAL DETERMINANTS OF ATTRACTION: THE NEED TO AFFILIATE AND THE BASIC ROLE OF AFFECT

### THE IMPORTANCE OF AFFILIATION IN HUMAN EXISTENCE – AND INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION

- Our tendency to affiliate seems to have a neurobiological basis.
- Cooperation with others may have been a basic survival tactic.

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#### INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN THE NEED TO AFFILIATE

- **Need for affiliation:** The basic motive to seek and maintain interpersonal relationships.
- People differ greatly in their need for affiliation. These differences, whether based on genetics or experience, constitute a relatively stable trait (or disposition).
- Social exclusion leaves us feeling hurt, sad, and angry, and leads to increased sensitivity to interpersonal information and actually results in less effective cognitive functioning.

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#### ARE THERE PEOPLE WHO DON'T NEED OTHER PEOPLE?

- Research shows that some people show the dismissing avoidant style – a pattern in which they claim to have little or no need for emotional attachments to others, and who, in fact, tend to avoid close relationships.
- Research findings indicate that even people who show the dismissing avoidant style need affiliation. They simply need far less than other people.
- People with the dismissing avoidant style show increased self-esteem and improved moods when they find out that they are accepted by others.
- Our affiliation needs and differences in attachment style are a very basic aspect of the social side of life.
- Attachment styles exert strong effects on both our thinking about others and our relationships with them, and such effects, in turn, influence important aspects of our behaviour, such as the tendency to seek their support or engage in self-disclosure.

- Individual differences in attachment style can be measured at the level of brain functioning.

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#### SITUATIONAL INFLUENCES ON THE NEED TO AFFILIATE

- External events can temporarily boost our affiliation needs.
- People prefer to interact with people who are going through experiences that are similar to their own.
- Such affiliation provides the opportunity for social comparison. Arousing situations lead us to seek “cognitive clarity” in order to know what is happening, and emotional clarity.
- The presence of positive affect, regardless of its source, often leads to positive evaluations of other people, whereas negative affect often leads to negative evaluations.
- Emotions have a direct effect on attraction (through classical conditioning).

### SU 7.2. EXTERNAL DETERMINANTS OF ATTRACTION: PROXIMITY AND OTHERS' OBSERVABLE CHARACTERISTICS

- **Proximity:** In attraction research, the physical closeness between two individuals with respect to where they live, where they sit in a classroom, where they work, and so on. The smaller the physical distance, the greater the probability that the two people will come into repeated contact experiencing repeated exposure to one another, positive affect, and the development of mutual attraction.
- **Physical attractiveness:** The combination of characteristics that are evaluated as beautiful or handsome at the positive extreme and as unattractive at the negative extreme.

### THE POWER OF PROXIMITY: UNPLANNED CONTACTS

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#### WHY DOES PROXIMITY MATTER? REPEATED EXPOSURE IS THE KEY

- **Repeated exposure effect:** Zajonc's finding that frequent contact with any mildly negative, neutral, or positive stimulus results in an increasingly positive evaluation of that stimulus.
- We ordinarily respond with at least mild discomfort when we encounter anyone or anything new or unfamiliar. With repeated exposure, however, negative emotions decrease and positive emotions increase.
- However, if the person's initial reaction is very negative, repeated exposure may lead to greater dislike.

## OBSERVABLE CHARACTERISTICS OF OTHERS: THE EFFECTS OF PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS

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### BEAUTY MAY BE ONLY SKIN DEEP, BUT WE PAY A LOT OF ATTENTION TO SKIN

- Physical appearance is a powerful factor in our liking for others, and even in our selection of prospective and actual mates.
- Attractive people are evaluated more positively.

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### THE “WHAT IS BEAUTIFUL IS GOOD” EFFECT

- Attractive people are viewed as possessing desirable characteristics such as intelligence, good health, kindness, and generosity, to a greater extent than less attractive people.
- Dion, Berscheid, and Walster propose that we possess a very positive stereotype for highly attractive people.
- Lemay proposes that we project our own desire to form relationships with attractive people to them, and it is this projection that generates very positive perceptions of them.
- Attractive people are not more socially poised, kinder, more outgoing, and so on, than less attractive ones.
- Attractiveness is associated with popularity, good interpersonal skills, and high self-esteem, probably because attractive people spend their lives being liked and treated well.

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### WHAT, EXACTLY, IS “ATTRACTIVENESS”?

- Women who are judged to be attractive, fall into one of two groups.
- The first group is “cute”. These women have “childlike features” consisting of large, widely spaced eyes and a small nose and chin.
- The other category is “mature”. These women have mature features with prominent cheekbones, high eyebrows, large pupils, and a big smile.
- The same categories seem to exist for men – being highly attractive can mean looking “cute” or “boyish”, or mature and masculine.
- Langlois and Roggman, when combining several facial photographs into one face, found that composite faces are rated as more attractive than most of the individual faces used to make the composite.
- It is possible that we form schemas based on the basis of our experiences with many different images, so a composite face is closer to that schema than any specific face.
- Perceptions of attractiveness are also influenced by the situation.

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### RED REALLY IS INDEED SEXY – AND ATTRACTIVE

- Women who wear red are rated as more attractive by men.
- Women do not rate men as more attractive if they wear red.

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## OTHER ASPECTS OF APPEARANCE AND BEHAVIOUR THAT INFLUENCE ATTRACTION

- Although the stereotypes associated with different body builds are often incorrect, many people tend to associate a round body build with an easy-going disposition, relaxed personality, and a lack of personal discipline.
- A hard and muscular body is perceived as indicating good health, high energy and vigour.
- A thin and angular body is perceived as a sign of intelligence and perhaps an introspective personality.
- A person with a youthful walking style elicits a more positive response than one who walks with an elderly style, regardless of gender or actual age.
- A person with a firm handshake is perceived as being extroverted and emotionally expressive – positive characteristics.
- People respond positively to someone whose behaviour is animated and who acts modestly rather than arrogantly.
- A person's name influences others' perception of them.

## SU 7.3. FACTORS BASED ON INTERACTING WITH OTHERS: SIMILARITY AND MUTUAL LIKING

### SIMILARITY: BIRDS OF A FEATHER ACTUALLY DO FLOCK TOGETHER

- Newcomb found that similar attitudes predicted subsequent liking between students, thereby confirming Aristotle's similarity hypothesis.
- Research has failed to support complementarity (differences that complement each other) as a determinant of attraction, even with respect to dominance and submissiveness. (Opposites attract – not true)
- One exception may occur in situations of dominance versus submission in male-female contexts.

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### SIMILARITY-DISSIMILARITY: A CONSISTENT PREDICTOR OF ATTRACTION

- **Similarity-dissimilarity effect:** The consistent finding that people respond positively to indications that another person is similar to themselves and negatively to indications that another person is dissimilar from themselves.
- **Attitude similarity:** The extent to which two individuals share the same attitudes.
- **Proportion of similarity:** The number of specific indicators that two people are similar divided by the number of specific indicators that two people are similar plus the number of specific indicators that they are dissimilar.
- **Repulsion hypothesis:** Rosenbaum's provocative proposal that attraction is not increased by similar attitudes but is simply decreased by dissimilar attitudes. This

hypothesis is incorrect as stated, but it is true that dissimilar attitudes tend to have negative effects that are stronger than the positive effects of similar attitudes.

- Not only do we like people who are similar to ourselves, we also judge them to be more intelligent, better informed, more moral, and better adjusted than people who are dissimilar.
- Attraction is determined by proportion of similarity. The higher the proportion of similarity, the greater the liking.

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#### DO PEOPLE SEEK SIMILARITY IN PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS? THE MATCHING HYPOTHESIS REVISITED

- **Matching hypothesis:** The idea that although we would prefer to obtain extremely attractive romantic partners, we generally focus on obtaining ones whose physical beauty is about the same as our own.
- Very little evidence for the matching hypothesis has been obtained. Studies indicate that people try to obtain the most attractive partners available.
- Van Straaten, Engles, Fainkenauer, and Holland found that men invest more effort in building a relationship with a stranger when they are similar in attractiveness. However, women did not engage in strong efforts to impress their partner regardless of whether they were similar to the person or not.

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#### EXPLAINING THE EFFECT OF SIMILARITY-DISSIMILARITY ON ATTRACTION

- **Balance theory:** The formulations of Heider and of Newcomb that specify the relationships among (1) an individual's liking for another person, (2) his/her attitude about a given topic, and (3) the other person's attitude about the same topic. Balance (liking plus agreement) results in a positive emotional state. Imbalance (liking plus disagreement) results in a negative state and a desire to restore balance. Non-balance (disliking plus either agreement or disagreement) leads to indifference.
- **Social comparison theory:** Festinger (1954) suggested that people compare themselves to others because, for many domains and attributes, there is no objective yardstick with which to evaluate the self, so we compare ourselves to others to gain this information.

#### RECIPROCAL LIKING OR DISLIKING: LIKING THOSE WHO LIKE US

- We tend to like those who express liking toward us, and dislike others who indicate that they don't think we are that great.
- Even false flattery, as long as it's not too obvious, impresses us.

#### WHAT DO WE DESIRE IN OTHERS? DESIGNING IDEAL INTERACTION PARTNERS

- Research indicates that trustworthiness and cooperativeness are seen as the most important traits, followed by agreeableness (being kind, interpersonally warm) and extraversion (being outgoing and sociable). We value other traits, such as attractiveness, humour, and intelligence) differentially depending on the kind of relationship we have with the other person.
- Intelligence is rated as very important for project teams and study groups, but much less important for fraternity or sorority members.
- Humour is rated as very important for close friends, but less important for employees or project team and study group members.

## SU 7.4. CLOSE (AND INTERDEPENDENT) RELATIONSHIPS: FAMILY, FRIENDS, LOVERS, AND SPOUSES

- Relationships are strongly influenced by the cultures in which they develop.

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY MEMBERS: OUR FIRST – AND MOST LASTING – CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

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#### RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS

- During their first year, infants are extremely sensitive to facial expressions, body movements, and the sounds people make.
- The mother is usually the primary caretaker, and she is equally sensitive to what the infant does.
- As they interact, they communicate and reinforce the actions of one another. The adult shows interest in the infant's communication in various ways such as engaging in baby talk and displaying exaggerated facial expressions. The infant, in turn, shows interest by attempting to make appropriate sounds and expressions.

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#### THE LASTING IMPORTANCE OF PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS: THEIR ROLE IN ATTACHMENT STYLE

- **Attachment style:** A concept developed by Bowlby. The degree of security experienced in interpersonal relationships. Differential styles initially develop in the interactions between infant and caregiver when the infant acquires basic attitudes about self-worth and interpersonal trust.
- Infants acquire two basic attitudes during their earliest interactions with an adult: self-esteem and interpersonal trust.
- **Interpersonal trust:** An attitudinal dimension underlying attachment styles that involves the belief that other people are generally trustworthy, dependable, and reliable as opposed to the belief that others are generally untrustworthy, undependable, and unreliable. This is the most successful and most desirable attachment style.

- We develop these basic attitudes about self and about others long before we acquire language skills.
- **Four contrasting attachment styles:**
  - **Secure attachment style:** This person is high in both self-esteem and trust. Secure individuals are best able to form lasting, committed, satisfying relationships throughout life.
  - **Fearful-avoidant attachment style:** This person is low in both self-esteem and interpersonal trust. Fearful-avoidant individuals tend not to form close relationships or to have unhappy ones.
  - **Preoccupied attachment style:** This person is low in self-esteem, but high in interpersonal trust. He/she wants closeness (sometimes excessively so), and readily forms relationships. He/she clings to others, but expect eventually to be rejected because he/she believes him/herself to be unworthy.
  - **Dismissing attachment style:** this person is high in self-esteem and low in interpersonal trust. This combination leads to the belief that one is very much deserving of good relationships, but because these individuals don't trust others, they fear genuine closeness. They are the kind of people who state that they don't want or need close relationships with others.
- Those with a secure attachment style are more likely to have positive long-term relationships, whereas those with a fearful-avoidant style often avoid such relationships or have ones that fail – often badly.
- Attachment styles can be changed by life experiences.
- Adolescents with an insecure attachment style often do worse in school than ones with secure attachment styles, form fewer friendships, and often turn into “outsiders”. Such people also experience higher levels of stress when they have conflict with relationship partners.
- Those with insecure attachment (and especially a fearful-avoidant style) are more likely to commit suicide.

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#### THE ROLE OF OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS

- The negative effects of having a withdrawn, unreliable mother can be partly offset by the presence of an outgoing, dependable grandfather.
- Every interaction is potentially important as the young person is developing attitudes about the meaning and value of such factors as trust, affection, self-worth, competition, and humour.

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#### RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN AND AMONG SIBLINGS

- Among elementary school children, those who have no siblings are found to be less liked by their classmates and to be more aggressive or to be more victimized by aggressors than those with siblings, presumably because having siblings provides useful interpersonal learning experiences.
- Sibling relationships often combine feelings of affection, hostility, and rivalry.

- Most siblings get along fairly well.

## FRIENDSHIPS: RELATIONSHIPS BEYOND THE FAMILY

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### CLOSE FRIENDSHIPS

- **Close friendship:** A relationship in which two people spend a great deal of time together, interact in a variety of situations, and provide mutual emotional support.
- Some childhood friendships can mature into close friendships that last for decades, or even a lifetime.
- Most people tend to engage in self-enhancing behaviour when interacting with a wide range of others, but they exhibit modesty when interacting with their long-term friends.
- Friends are less likely to lie to each other, unless the lie is designed to make the friend feel better.
- Friends begin to speak of “we” and “us” rather than “she and I” or “he and I”.
- Once established, a close friendship results in the two individuals spending increasing amounts of time together, interacting in varied situations, self-disclosing, and providing mutual emotional support.
- A close friend is valued for his/her generosity, sensitivity, and honesty – someone with whom you can relax and be yourself.
- Cultural differences exist with respect to friendship.

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### GENDER AND FRIENDSHIPS

- Women report having more close friends than men do, and place more importance on intimacy (e.g. self-disclosure and emotional support).
- Graduating seniors, especially women, report more intense emotional involvement when interacting with close friends than is true for students not facing graduation.

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### IS SIMILARITY THE BASIS FOR FRIENDSHIP

- Many previous studies suggest that actual similarity should play a key role in friendship formation, but other research indicates that determining actual similarity takes a long time and is often an uncertain process.
- Perceived similarity, however, can develop almost immediately and exert its effects from the very start of a relationship.
- Research results showed that actual similarity did not predict who became friends, while perceived similarity predicted this outcome very well.

## LONELINESS

- Loneliness implies a life without close relationships. It is the unpleasant emotional and cognitive state that results from desiring close relationships, but being unable to attain them.

- Lonely people experience an array of negative emotions, such as depression and self-blame, and others often see them as maladjusted.
- Loneliness is associated with poor health and even greater mortality, often caused by sleep problems.
- The origins of loneliness include a combination of genetic factors, attachment style, and early social experiences with peers.
- Research shows that loneliness can be identified with dismissing and fearful-avoidant attachment styles, caused by these people's lack of interpersonal trust. Insecure attachment is also associated with social anxiety and loneliness.
- Inappropriately developed social skills can also lead to loneliness. Without social skills, children engage in self-defeating behaviours or verbal aggression. Children with inadequate social skills tend to become adults without proper social skills, and lonely children tend to become lonely adults.
- Inappropriate interpersonal behaviour leads to rejection and unpopularity and thus increases loneliness – a vicious self-destructive cycle.
- Loneliness can be reduced by acquiring more appropriate social skills through cognitive therapy and social skills training. The goal of cognitive therapy is to disrupt the pattern of negativity and to encourage new thoughts. With social skills training, lonely people are given examples of socially appropriate behaviour to practice in actual social situations.
- Ferns found that meaningful social contact plays an important role in the experience of loneliness.
- In general, South African research findings confirm that childhood issues could carry over to early adulthood, and that meaningful social contact is imperative.

## SU 7.5. ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS AND FALLING IN LOVE

### LOVE: ITS BASIC NATURE

- **Love:** A combination of emotions, cognitions, and behaviours that often play a crucial role in intimate relationships.
- Falling in love leads to an increase in self-efficacy and self-esteem.
- Love is not merely close friendship extended to physical intimacy, and it involves more than merely being romantically or sexually interested in another person.
- Love is a universal experience.

### PASSIONATE LOVE

- **Passionate love:** An intense and often unrealistic emotional response to another person. When this emotion is experienced, it is usually perceived as an indication of true love, but to outside observers it appears to be infatuation.
- You can be sexually attracted to someone without being in love, but you aren't likely to be in love in the absence of sexual attraction.

- Sexual activity tends to be romanticised. Love makes sex more acceptable.
- In addition to sex, passionate love includes strong emotional arousal, the desire to be physically close, and an intense need to be loved as much as you love the other person.
- **Unrequited love:** Love felt by one person for another who does not feel love in return.
- Unrequited love is common among people with a conflicted attachment style.
- Hatfield and Walster suggest that passionate love requires the presence of 3 basic factors. First, you have to have an idea or concept of passionate love. Second, an appropriate love object must be present. Third, the individual must be in a state of physiological arousal that can be interpreted as the emotion of love.

## WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF LOVE?

- One possibility is that love is simply a pleasant fantasy that people belonging to a given culture share at certain times of life.
- Another possibility is that our early ancestors' survival (and that of the species) depended on their reproductive success, and such success was more likely if heterosexual pairs were erotically attracted to one another and if they were willing to invest time and effort in feeding and protecting any offspring they produced.
- It was also beneficial if our ancestors liked and trusted one another and if they could divide tasks such as hunting and childcare.
- Cultural influences can affect both desire and commitment.

## SEVERAL KINDS OF LOVE

- **Companionate love:** Love that is based on friendship, mutual attraction, shared interests, respect, and concern for one another's welfare. Companionate love serves as a foundation for lasting, committed relationships.
- **Sternberg's triangular model of love:** Each love relationship is made up of 3 basic components that are present in varying degrees in different couples. The components:
  - **Intimacy:** The closeness felt by two people – the extent to which they are bonded. Intimacy is essentially companionate love. Partners high in intimacy are concerned with each other's welfare and happiness, and they value, like, count on, and understand one another.
  - **Passion:** The sexual motives and sexual excitement associated with a couple's relationship. Passion is essentially passionate love. Men are more likely to stress this component than women.
  - **Decision/Commitment:** The cognitive processes involved in deciding that you love another person and are committed to maintain the relationship.
- When all three of angles of the triangle are equally strong and balanced, the result is **consummate love** – a complete and ideal love that combines intimacy, passion, and decision (commitment).
- Research findings suggest that appearance is not simply important with respect to passion, but with respect to intimacy and decision/commitment as well. Also, attractiveness is as important in the later stages of a relationship as it is at the beginning.

## JEALOUSY: AN INTERNAL THREAT TO RELATIONSHIPS – ROMANTIC AND OTHERWISE

- Jealousy is a major factor in a large proportion of homicides against women; women are most likely to be murdered by current or former jealous partners.
- Evidence suggests that jealousy is largely the result of threats to one's self-esteem – threats that occur whenever someone we care about (a lover, work partner, good friend) seem ready to desert us for a rival.

## SEEKING ROMANTIC PARTNERS: DO WOMEN AND MEN DIFFER IN WHAT THEY SEEK?

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### THE ROLE OF PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS

- Women's physical appeal and youth play a stronger role in men's preferences for them than men's physical appeal and youth play in women's choice of romantic partners.

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### POSSIBLE FUTURE SELVES AND MATE PREFERENCES

- Eagly and colleagues found that the social roles people expect to play in life is an important factor in determining what they sought in a possible future mate.
- People seek someone with whom they can readily divide key tasks or responsibilities. Someone who expects to be a home-maker, would seek a mate who is able to provide financially.
- Regardless of the role they expect to play themselves, women value good provider skills or traits more highly than men.
- Women express a preference for mates older than themselves, while men express a preference for ones younger.
- According to an evolutionary perspective, the reason that females are less concerned about male youth and attractiveness is explained by the fact that while women have a limited age span during which reproduction is possible, men are usually able to reproduce from puberty well into old age.
- For prehistoric females, reproductive success was enhanced by choosing a mate who had the ability to protect and care for her and for their offspring.
- Cultural factors are important, and research findings indicate that both men and women prefer a wealthy and healthy mate.

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### IS THE "MATING GAME" A COMPETITIVE ONE – OR CAN IT INVOLVE COOPERATION TOO?

- There appears to be room for cooperation with respect to obtaining desirable mates. Ackerman and Kenrick suggest that it could stem from the fact that women generally are more selective in obtaining mates than men – they seek to erect barriers to keep undesirable mates away.

- Men are less selective, and are more intent on gaining access to females – especially ones they find desirable.
- Women engage in more cooperative behaviour in the “mating game” than men, but both genders clearly engage in cooperative as well as competitive actions.

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### SECRET ROMANCES: ENTICING, BUT DANGEROUS

- Many people like a little mystery and danger in their lives, and being involved in a secret romance is one way to obtain these experiences.
- Research indicates that keeping a romance secret is related to reduced commitment to it, and to reduced cognitive interdependence between the partners; they could not get close in important ways.
- People involved in secret romances report negative effects on their physical and psychological health; the stress involved in keeping the romances a secret takes a heavy toll.
- Lehmiller found that the costs associated with maintaining a secret romance tend to outweigh any benefits derived from the sense of mystery or excitement.

## SU 7.6. MARRIAGE: HAPPILY EVER AFTER OR NOT?

- In the 1930s, Terman and Bottenwieser found that the degree to which couples were similar or dissimilar was associated with their happiness.

### MARITAL HAPPINESS

- Similarity between spouses is an important predictor of marital happiness.
- Both actual and assumed similarity increases marital satisfaction.
- The stronger a couple’s tendency to hold positive illusions about each other, the longer the mutual love and happiness will be.
- Pretorius, Van Wyk, and Schepers developed and applied a marital preparation programme. Evaluation of their subjects indicated that the engaged couples who participated in the programme had significantly better scores on the scales, compared to the couples who did not participate in the programme.
- Marital success is affected by certain personality dispositions/traits. Narcissistic people are not likely to have happy relationships.
- Personality characteristics such as anxiety, negative affect, and neuroticism are also associated with interpersonal negativity and marital dissatisfaction.

### WHY RELATIONSHIPS FAIL – AND WHY, SOMETIMES, THEY SUCCEED

- About 50% of marriages end in divorce.
- Partners should exercise self-control and try to engage in intentionally positive behaviours, while avoiding intentionally negative ones.

- An important reason for relationship failure is the discovery that there is a difference between the assumed similarities and actual similarities.
- Initially tolerated negative personality traits might also become unbearable later.
- There is also an inevitable conflict between the need for independence and a yearning for closeness.
- Jealousy can also cause problems in relationships.
- The idea prevails that we will be loved, but only when we are successful, and this may grind down loving relationships – especially among those with low self-esteem.
- In marginalised relationships, various external pressures might have a strong influence. It might either lead to a reduced willingness by both partners to invest in the relationship, or the external disapproval might cause reactance leading to a greater commitment.
- Failed relationships lead to intense distress and anger because of the ‘wasted’ time and effort.
- When it is clear that a relationship is in trouble, people can respond either actively or passively. Secure attachment style individuals are those working more actively, while insecure people end the relationship or wait for it to get worse.
- FAMSA specialises in marital and related problems.

# 8: SOCIAL INFLUENCE: CHANGING OTHERS' BEHAVIOUR

- **Social influence**: Efforts by one or more persons to change the behaviour, attitudes, or feelings of one or more others.
- **Conformity**: A type of social influence in which individuals change their attitudes or behaviour to adhere to existing social norms.
- **Compliance**: A form of social influence involving direct requests from one person to another.
- **Symbolic social influence**: Social influence resulting from the mental representation of others or our relationships with them.
- **Obedience**: A form of social influence in which one person simply orders one or more others to perform some action(s).

## SU 8.1. CONFORMITY: GROUP INFLUENCE IN ACTION

- **Social norms**: Rules indicating how individuals are expected to behave in specific situations.
- The fact that we can predict others' behaviour (and our own) with considerable confidence in many situations illustrates the effects of pressures toward conformity.
- Social norms can be stated explicitly and in detail, or they may be implicit and informal.
- Most people follow social norms most of the time.
- Without conformity, we would face social chaos.
- Sometimes people conform in order to make a positive impression on others.
- **Facades of conformity**: The appearance of agreeing with and conforming to the values and goals of organizations, even if you do not.

## HOW MUCH DO WE CONFORM? MORE THAN WE THINK

- We feel more comfortable when we are similar to our friends and family than when we are different from them.
- Research shows that we believe we are far less susceptible to conformity pressure than other people.
- Pronin, Berger, and Molouki reasoned that people underestimate the impact of social influence on their own actions because in trying to understand these actions, they tend to focus on internal information rather than on the overt actions.
- **Introspection illusion**: Our belief that social influence plays a smaller role in shaping our own actions than it does in shaping the actions of others.

- In collectivist societies, such as Japan, conforming has no negative implications attached to it, and as a result, people may be more willing to admit that they conform.

## ASCH'S RESEARCH ON CONFORMITY: SOCIAL PRESSURE – THE IRRESISTABLE FORCE?

- Asch created a compelling social dilemma for his participants whose task was ostensibly to simply respond to a series of perceptual problems.
- Asch's research found that the large majority of people choose conformity.
- Nearly 25% of the participants never yielded to group pressure.
- Some individuals went along with the majority nearly every time, even when they knew the others were wrong.
- Asch also found that it is the unanimity of the group that is crucial. Once it is broken, resisting group pressure becomes much easier.
- It is important to distinguish between public conformity (doing/saying what others around us say/do) and private acceptance (actually coming to feel/thing as others do).
- Often, it appears, we follow social norms overtly, but don't actually change our private views.

## SHERIF'S RESEARCH ON THE AUTOKINETIC PHENOMENON: HOW NORMS EMERGE

- **The autokinetic phenomenon:** The apparent movement of a single, stationary source of light in a dark room. Often used to study the emergence of social norms and social influence.
- Sherif found that when placing people in a dark room with others and exposing them to a single, stationary source of light, and then asking them to report how much they perceive the light to be moving, they influence one another and soon converge on a particular amount of movement; that agreement, in a sense, constitutes a group norm.
- When the same people are subsequently alone, they continue to give estimates of the lights movement consistent with the group norm – the effect of such norms persist.
- We have a strong desire to be correct, and social norms help us attain that goal.

## FACTORS AFFECTING CONFORMITY: VARIABLES THAT DETERMINE THE EXTENT TO WHICH WE “GO ALONG”

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### COHESIVENESS AND CONFORMITY: BEING INFLUENCED BY THOSE WE LIKE

- **Cohesiveness:** The extent to which we are attracted to a social group and want to belong to it.
- The more we like other people and want to belong to the same group as they do, and the more we are uncertain of winning their acceptance, the more we tend to conform.

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## CONFORMITY AND GROUP SIZE: WHY MORE IS BETTER WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL PRESSURE

- The larger the group – the greater the number of people who behave in some specific way – the greater our tendency to conform and “do as they do”.

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## DESCRIPTIVE AND INJUNCTIVE SOCIAL NORMS: HOW NORMS AFFECT BEHAVIOUR

- **Descriptive norms**: Norms simply indicating what most people do in a given situation.
- **Injunctive norms**: Norms specifying what ought to be done; what is approved or disapproved behaviour in a given situation.
- **Normative focus theory**: A theory suggesting that norms will influence behaviour only to the extent that they are focal for the people involved at the time the behaviour occurs.
- People will obey injunctive norms only when they think about them and see them as relevant to their own actions.

## SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF CONFORMITY: WHY WE OFTEN CHOOSE TO “GO ALONG”

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### NORMATIVE SOCIAL INFLUENCE: THE DESIRE TO BE LIKED

- One reason we conform is that we have learned that conformity can help us win the approval and acceptance we crave.
- **Normative social influence**: Social influence based on the desire to be liked or accepted by other people.

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### THE DESIRE TO BE RIGHT: INFORMATIONAL SOCIAL INFLUENCE

- **Informational social influence**: Social influence based on the desire to be correct (i.e. to possess accurate perceptions of the social world).
- Because our motivation to be correct/accurate is very strong, informational social influence is a powerful source of conformity. However, this is more likely to be true in situations where we are highly uncertain about what is “correct” or “accurate” than in situations where we have more confidence in our own ability to make such decisions.

## THE DOWNSIDE OF CONFORMITY: WHY GOOD PEOPLE SOMETIMES DO EVIL THINGS

- In the Stanford Prison Study, Zimbardo used a group of paid volunteers to stimulate a prison environment. Whether a volunteer became a guard or a prisoner was determined at random. Zimbardo wanted to determine whether participants would come to behave

like real guards/prisoners, conforming to the norms established for their roles. The participants conformed to their roles to such an extent that it was necessary to stop the study prematurely.

- Zimbardo contends that the study shows that it is the situations in which people find themselves – not their personal traits – that largely determine their behaviour. He suggests that it is their tendency to yield to situational pressures – including conformity pressures – that is responsible for much evil behaviour.
- Zimbardo recognizes that some people seem able to resist even powerful situational or conformity pressures.
- In a more recent prison study, however, the “prison” adopted a democratic structure, and when this failed, both groups moved toward a rigid authoritarian approach in which the prisoners surrendered almost totally and no longer offered any resistance to their inequality.
- Social norms and the social structure from which they arise do not necessarily produce acceptance of inequalities.
- Whether individuals go along with roles that impose inequality depends on the extent to which the people involved identify with these roles.

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#### A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

- Research suggests that conforming to certain gender norms may influence personal happiness.
- Conformity pressures influence the belief in rape myths. When males start to believe that these myths are widely accepted by other men, they show an increased acceptance of such myths themselves. This leads to an increased acceptance of using force to obtain sexual favours from or relations with women. This force can range from sexual harassment to rape.
- The way in which men and women socialise can be seen as a major cause of sexual harassment. Men who were brought up with so-called macho beliefs, for example, that girls were made to hug and kiss, often carry these beliefs into the workplace and treat female colleagues accordingly. Women who believe that a woman’s calling is to please men, or who regard it as important to look sexy, may sometimes give the impression that they invite sexual advances. Such perceptions by men are usually incorrect, however.
- Playing of power games is also an important cause of harassment. Men play power games when they are threatened by the new-found independence of women. Sometimes, men who have recently gained positions of power also feel a need to prove themselves by harassing women colleagues. Some even go so far as to regard flirtations or sex as fringe benefits to which they are entitled.
- Moral values, divorce, and cultural differences are a possible cause of sexual harassment, according to Prekel. Some people often equate monogamy with boredom, and contemporary moral permissiveness allows them to contemplate office flirtations. Those who are rejected, or see the reluctant colleague as a challenge, may start to harass them. Others, who are under emotional distress because of divorce or related issues, are equally vulnerable to harassment.

- Regarding cultural differences, Prekel highlights the confusion about what is acceptable or not in South Africa's rapidly changing society.
- Another cause for harassment is group bravado. Male aggression, when part of a group, can lead to group harassment. Individuals suffering from low self-esteem could also use group situations as a way to prove themselves.
- A final, important reason for sexual harassment is victim blaming: suggesting that the victim was looking for it.
- Prekel distinguishes 6 types of harassers:
  1. Mr Macho (or One of the Boys): comes to the fore in bravado situations. Typically embarrasses women with unwanted comments, indecent jokes, or even physical evaluation.
  2. Mr Gallant: the man measuring out excessive compliments and making unsuitable comments that are often accompanied by leering looks.
  3. The Opportunist: promiscuous in his attention to colleagues or clients. Whenever he sees an opportunity, his eyes and hands start wandering.
  4. Power Player: His game is the so-called 'quid pro quo' sexual harassment, where threats or promises – thanks to his position – are made in exchange for sexual favours.
  5. Serial Harasser: This person carefully builds up a clean image, plans his approaches carefully, and strikes only in private where it can only be his word against that of the woman.
  6. Situational Harasser: The stimulus for this type is psychological and situational circumstances, such as divorce, his wife's illness, impotence, alcoholism, or even Alzheimer's disease.
- Women who are most vulnerable to harassment are those who are the heads of their households, divorcees or widows, and those who are insecure about their abilities or lack career-related education and are easy to replace. Some harassers may regard a woman in a high position as a challenge. Submissive women and saleswomen are also vulnerable to harassment.
- Reactions to sexual harassment include reporting the incidents, and the psychological and occupational effects of being harassed.
- Factors predicting the reporting of harassment include the severity of the harassment, fear of not being believed, belief in the effectiveness of reporting, fear of being accused of provocation, or fear of retaliation, and a lack of knowledge regarding how to report it.
- Psychological effects of harassment include anger, frustration, depression, anxiety, irritability, humiliation, and loss of self-esteem and confidence. Specific occupational effects include reduced morale, increased absenteeism, and poor concentration.

WHY WE SOMETIMES CHOOSE NOT TO GO ALONG: THE EFFECTS OF POWER, BASIC MOTIVES, AND THE DESIRE FOR UNIQUENESS

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## POWER AS A SHIELD AGAINST CONFORMITY

- Several psychologists have noted that the restrictions that often influence the thought, expression, and behaviour of most people don't seem to apply to the powerful.
- Powerful people are less dependent on others for obtaining social resources, and therefore feel less need to conform.
- They may be less likely to take the perspective of other people and so be less influenced by them. Their thought and actions are more shaped by their own internal states.
- We sometimes admire powerful people who ignore the rules, and view their independent actions as further proof that they are deserving of the power they possess.

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## SEXUAL MOTIVES AND NONCONFORMITY: WHY THE DESIRE TO ATTRACT DESIRABLE MATES MAY SOMETIMES COUNTER CONFORMITY PRESSURES – AT LEAST AMONG MEN

- Some researchers reason that for men, but perhaps not necessarily for women, standing up to group pressure may add to their attractiveness and help them win desirable romantic partners. This is because gender stereotypes often include assertiveness and independence for men, but not for women.
- Research suggests that women find assertiveness, decisiveness, independence, and willingness to take risks desirable in men. Men don't find such traits attractive in women, so women would have less reason to use nonconformity to increase their own attractiveness.
- Women know that seeming agreeable is more attractive to many men.
- Both groups show conformity to gender stereotypes, which are made salient by the dating situation. For men this implies less conformity, while for women, it does not.

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## THE DESIRE TO BE UNIQUE AND NONCONFORMITY

- Imhoff and Erb reason that people have a need for uniqueness, and that when it is threatened, they will actively resist conformity pressures to restore their sense of uniqueness.

## DO WOMEN AND MEN DIFFER IN THE TENDENCY TO CONFORM?

- Eagly and Carli concluded that women are only slightly more accepting of social influence than men.
- Both genders are more easily influenced when they are uncertain about how to behave or about the correctness of their judgments. It appears that men are more certain about how to behave, and therefore show less conformity.

- Sistrunk and McDavid found that when males and females were equally familiar with the situations or materials employed, differences between them in terms of conformity disappeared.
- Men tend to hold higher status jobs and positions than women, and there is a relationship between status and susceptibility to social influence.
- Lower status leads to greater tendencies to conform.
- Overall, women are generally not more susceptible to conformity pressures than men.

## MINORITY INFLUENCE: DOES THE MAJORITY ALWAYS RULE?

- Minorities are more likely to influence majorities when the members of the minority group are consistent in their opposition to majority opinions.
- Members of the minority group must also avoid appearing to be rigid and dogmatic.
- The general social context in which a minority operates is important. If a minority argues for a position that is consistent with current social trends, its chances of influencing the majority are greater than if it argues for a position out of step with such trends.

## SU 8.2. COMPLIANCE: TO ASK – SOMETIMES – IS TO RECEIVE

### COMPLIANCE: THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

- Based on his research, Cialdini concluded that although techniques for gaining compliance take many different forms, they all rest to some degree on six basic principles:
  - **Friendship/liking:** We are more willing to comply with requests from people we like.
  - **Commitment/consistency:** Once we have committed ourselves to a position/action, we are more willing to comply with requests for behaviours that are consistent with this position/action.
  - **Scarcity:** We value, and try to secure, outcomes or objects that are scarce.
  - **Reciprocity:** We are more willing to comply with a request from someone who has previously provided a favour/concession to us.
  - **Social validation:** We are more willing to comply with a request for some action if this action is consistent with what we believe people similar to ourselves are doing.
  - **Authority:** We are more willing to comply with requests from someone who holds legitimate authority – or appears to.

### TACTICS BASED ON FRIENDSHIP OR LIKING: INGRATIATION

- Impression management techniques are often used for purposes of ingratiation.

- Flattery, self-promotion, improving one's own appearance, emitting many positive nonverbal cues, and doing small favours for the target people are the ingratiation techniques that seem to work best.
- Another technique to increase others' liking for us is incidental similarity – calling attention to small and slightly surprising similarities between them and ourselves.
- Research found that people were more likely to agree to a small request from a stranger when this person appeared to have the same first name or birthday as they did.
- Trivial forms of similarity enhance liking or a feeling of affiliation with the requester and so increase the tendency to comply with the person's requests.

### TACTICS BASED ON COMMITMENT OR CONSISTENCY: THE FOOT-IN-THE-DOOR AND THE LOWBALL

- **Foot-in-the-door technique:** A procedure for gaining compliance in which requesters begin with a small request and then, when this is granted, escalate to a larger one (the one they actually desired all along).
- **Low-ball procedure:** A technique for gaining compliance in which an offer or deal is changed to make it less attractive to the target person after this person has accepted it.
- Research shows that the foot-in-the-door technique is quite effective, and succeeds in inducing increased compliance.
- The lowball procedure rests on the principles of commitment: only when individuals are permitted to make an initial public commitment does it work. Having made this initial commitment, they feel compelled to stick with it.

### TACTICS BASED ON RECIPROCITY: THE DOOR-IN-THE-FACE AND THE “THAT’S-NOT-ALL” APPROACH

- Reciprocity is a basic rule of social life: we do unto others as they have done unto us.
- **Door-in-the-face technique:** A procedure for gaining compliance in which requesters begin with a large request and then, when this is refused, retreat to a smaller one (the one they actually desired all along).
- The door-in-the-face technique works on the internet, as well as in face-to-face situations.
- **That's-not-all technique:** A technique for gaining compliance in which requesters offer additional benefits to target people before they have decided whether to comply with or reject specific requests.
- Several studies confirm that the that's-not-all technique works. This may be because it is based on the principle of reciprocity: people on the receiving end of this approach view the “extra” thrown in by the other side as an added concession, and feel obliged to make a concession themselves.

### TACTICS BASED ON SCARCITY: PLAYING HARD TO GET AND THE FAST-APPROACHING-DEADLINE TECHNIQUE

- **Playing hard to get**: A technique that can be used for increasing compliance by suggesting that a person or object is scarce and hard to obtain. Research indicates that this technique often works.
- **Deadline technique**: A technique for increasing compliance in which target people are told that they have only limited time to take advantage of some offer or to obtain some item.

### SU 8.3. SYMBOLIC SOCIAL INFLUENCE: HOW WE ARE INFLUENCED BY OTHERS EVEN WHEN THEY ARE NOT THERE

- Our mental representations of others – what they want or prefer, our relationship with them, how we think they would evaluate us or our current actions – can exert powerful effects on us, even when we are not consciously aware that they are occurring.
- To the extent other people are present in our thoughts, this may trigger relational schemas – mental representations of people with whom we have relationships, and of these relationships themselves. When these relational schemas are triggered, in turn, goals relevant to them may be activated too.
- The psychological presence of others may trigger goals with which that person is associated – goals they want us to achieve. This, in turn, can affect our performance on various tasks and our commitment to reaching these goals, among other things.

### SU 8.4. OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY: WOULD YOU HARM AN INNOCENT STRANGER IF ORDERED TO DO SO?

#### OBEDIENCE IN THE LABORATORY

- Stanley Milgrim devised an experiment in which paid volunteers were requested to deliver electric shocks to others.
- Milgrim's results suggest that ordinary people are willing, although with some reluctance, to harm an innocent stranger if ordered to do so by someone in authority – in a sense, echoing the theme stated by Zimbardo in the Stanford Prison Study.
- Burger recently replicated Milgram's study, with a few changes, and found similar results.
- The pressures to obey in a situation like the one Milgram created are difficult to resist – so difficult that many people yield to them, even if this means harming an innocent stranger who has done nothing to harm them.

#### DESTRUCTIVE OBEDIENCE: WHY IT OCCURS

- In many situations, the people in authority relieve those who obey of the responsibility of their own actions. This transfer of responsibility may be implicit.

- People in authority often possess visible badges or signs of their status. These serve to remind many individuals of the social norm “obey the people in charge”.
- In a sense, people in authority use the foot-in-the-door technique, asking for small actions first but ever-larger ones later.
- Events in many situations involving destructive obedience move very quickly. This gives participants little time for reflection or systematic thought. They obey almost automatically.

## DESTRUCTIVE OBEDIENCE: RESISTING ITS EFFECTS

- Individuals exposed to commands from authority figures can be reminded that they – not the authorities – are responsible for any harm produced. This results in sharp reductions in the tendency to obey.
- Individuals can be provided with a clear indication that beyond some point, total submission to destructive commands is inappropriate. This might involve exposing individuals to the actions of disobedient models, which can reduce unquestioning obedience.
- Individuals may find it easier to resist influence from authority figures if they question the expertise and motives of these figures.
- Simply knowing about the power of authority figures to command blind obedience may be helpful in itself.

## A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

- Foster summarised the various processes that might have led to destructive obedience and violence in South Africa’s past:
  - Forming a strong identification with an in-group (by the ruling elite)
  - Creating an ideology by which the in-group is entitled to specific power or privilege
  - Defining an identity for the out-group, so that its members do not qualify for power and privilege
  - Encouraging negative stereotyping of out-group members
  - Pressuring in-group members to conform to in-group values, and to obey in-group leaders
  - Using force or violence to maintain the privileges of the in-group, and to punish out-group members who threaten it.

# 9: PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR: HELPING OTHERS

- **Prosocial behaviour:** Actions by individuals that help others with no immediate benefit to the helper.

## SU 9.1. WHY PEOPLE HELP: MOTIVES FOR PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

### EMPATHY-ALTRUISM: IT FEELS GOOD TO HELP OTHERS

- **Empathy:** Emotional reactions that are focused on or oriented toward other people and include feelings of compassion, sympathy, and concern.
- One explanation of prosocial behaviour involves empathy – we help others because we experience any unpleasant feelings they are experiencing vicariously.
- **Empathy-altruism hypothesis:** The suggestion that some prosocial acts are motivated solely by the desire to help someone in need.
- Research indicates that empathy consists of three components: an emotional aspect (**emotional empathy**, which involves sharing the feelings and emotions of others), a cognitive component, which involves perceiving others' thoughts and feelings accurately (**empathic accuracy**), and a third aspect, known as **empathic concern**, which involves feelings of concern for another's well-being.
- The three components are related to different aspects of prosocial behaviour, and have different long-term effects. Empathic accuracy appears to play a key role in social adjustment.
- Gleason's research found that a high level of empathic accuracy contributes strongly to students' ability to get along well with others.
- It is possible that people who get along well with others become more empathetic, perhaps as a result of pleasant interactions with lots of other people.
- Research indicates that empathy is declining among US college students. Factors such as increased exposure to violence in the media, increased emphasis on building individual self-esteem, an emphasis on putting yourself first, and the formation of online relationships may play a role.

### NEGATIVE-STATE RELIEF: HELPING SOMETIMES REDUCES UNPLEASANT FEELINGS

- **Negative-state relief model:** The proposal that prosocial behaviour is motivated by the bystander's desire to reduce his/her own uncomfortable negative emotions or feelings.

- In this kind of situation, unhappiness leads to prosocial behaviour, and empathy is not a necessary component.

## EMPATHIC JOY: HELPING AS AN ACCOMPLISHMENT

- **Empathic joy hypothesis:** The view that helpers respond to the needs of a victim because they want to accomplish something, and doing so is rewarding in and of itself.
- It is crucial for the person who helps to know that his/her actions had a positive impact on the victim.
- Smith's research found that empathy alone is not enough to produce a prosocial response. Participants in the study were helpful only if there was high empathy and they also received feedback about their action's impact on the victim.

## WHY NICE PEOPLE SOMETIMES FINISH FIRST: COMPETITIVE ALTRUISM

- **The competitive altruism approach:** suggests that one important reason why people help others is that doing so boosts their own status and reputation and, in this way, ultimately brings them large benefits, ones that more than offset the costs of engaging in prosocial actions.
- Research findings confirm that the motive to experience a boost in social status does lie behind many acts of prosocial behaviour – especially ones that bring public recognition.

## KIN SELECTION THEORY: HELPING OURSELVES BY HELPING PEOPLE WHO SHARE OUR GENES

- **Kin selection theory:** A theory suggesting that a key goal for all organisms – including human beings – is getting our genes into the next generation; one way in which individuals can reach this goal is by helping others who share their genes.
- Many studies support kin selection theory.
- **Reciprocal altruism theory** suggests that we may be willing to help people unrelated to us because helping is usually reciprocated: if we help them, they help us, so we do ultimately benefit, and our chances of survival could then be indirectly increased.

## DEFENSIVE HELPING: HELPING OUTGROUPS TO REDUCE THEIR THREAT TO ONE'S INGROUP

- **Defensive helping:** Help given to members of outgroups to reduce the threat they pose to the status or distinctiveness of one's own ingroup.
- Research suggests that one way of removing the threat posed by outgroups is to help them – especially in ways that make them seem dependent on such help, and therefore as incompetent or inadequate.

## SU 9.2. RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY: WILL BYSTANDERS HELP

### IS THERE SAFETY IN NUMBERS? SOMETIMES, BUT NOT ALWAYS

- **Diffusion of responsibility:** A principle suggesting that the greater the number of witnesses to an emergency, the less likely victims are to receive help. This is because each bystander assumes that someone else will do it.
- If the person needing help appears to be a member of one's own ingroup, they are more likely to get help.
- Darley and Latane's predictions about diffusion of responsibility were supported by research results.
- Kuntsman and Plant suggests that race of the victim and the helper may play a role, with black victims less likely to receive help from white bystanders, especially if they are high in aversive racism.

### UNDERSTANDING THE BYSTANDER EFFECT: FIVE CRUCIAL STEPS IN DECIDING TO HELP – OR NOT

- Latane and Darley proposed that the likelihood of a person engaging in prosocial actions is determined by a series of decisions that must be made quickly in the context of emergency situations.
- Here's a summary of the decisions involved, and the factors that play a role in each one:
  1. Noticing, or failing to notice, that something unusual is happening.
  2. Correctly interpreting an event as an emergency. With ambiguous information as to whether one is witnessing a serious problem or something trivial, most people are inclined to accept the latter, and take no action. It is embarrassing to misinterpret a situation and to act inappropriately. Pluralistic ignorance refers to the fact that because none of the bystanders respond to an emergency, no one knows for sure what is happening and each depends on the others to interpret the situation. This inhibiting effect is much less if the group consists of friends rather than strangers, or in small towns rather than big cities. Anxiety about the reactions of others and thus the fear of doing the wrong thing is reduced by alcohol.
  3. Deciding that it is your responsibility to provide help.
  4. Deciding that you have the knowledge and/or skills to act.
  5. Making the final decision to provide help. Helping at this final point can be inhibited by fears about potential negative consequences.

## SU 9.3. FACTORS THAT INCREASE OR DECREASE THE TENDENCY TO HELP

### SITUATIONAL (EXTERNAL) FACTORS INFLUENCE HELPING: SIMILARITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

- Research shows that we are more likely to help people who are similar to ourselves than people who are dissimilar.
- Research suggests that similarity to others increases our empathic concern for them, and our understanding of what they are experiencing.
- Although similarity is an important factor influencing empathy, it seems to primarily influence the emotional component of empathy, not the cognitive component (empathic accuracy).
- In general, we are less likely to act if we believe that the victim is to blame for his/her own circumstances.

### EXPOSURE TO LIVE PROSOCIAL MODELS

- The presence of a helpful bystander provides a strong social model, and the result is an increase in helping behaviour among the remaining bystanders.

### PLAYING PROSOCIAL VIDEO GAMES

- Playing prosocial video games might prime prosocial thoughts and schemas.
- Repeated exposure to such games might, over time, generate attitudes favourable to prosocial actions, emotions consistent with them, and other lasting changes in the ways in which individuals think that, together, could facilitate prosocial actions.
- This view has been supported by several studies.
- Video games appear to be neutral in and of themselves. Depending on their content, they can facilitate either harmful, aggressive actions or beneficial, prosocial ones. It is the nature of the games that is crucial.

### GRATITUDE: HOW IT INCREASES FURTHER HELPING

- Gratitude has been found to increase subsequent helping.
- Being thanked may add to the sense of self-efficacy.
- Being thanked may add to helpers' feelings of self-worth, their belief that they are valued.
- Grant and Gino found that expressions of gratitude increase helping by increasing helpers' feelings of self-worth.

### EMPATHY: AN IMPORTANT FOUNDATION FOR HELPING

- Among the various personal factors that influence helping, the one that appears to be most important is the tendency to experience empathy toward others – emotional

reactions that are focused on or oriented toward other people, and include feelings of compassion, sympathy, and concern.

- An empathetic person feels what another person is feeling and understands why that person feels as he/she does.
- Individual differences in the tendency to experience empathy appear to be relatively consistent over time.
- The affective component (emotional empathy) is an important component of empathy, and children as young as 12 months seem to clearly feel distress in response to the distress of others.
- The cognitive component of empathy appears to be a uniquely human quality that develops only after we progress beyond infancy. Such cognitions include the ability to consider the viewpoint of another person, sometimes referred to as perspective taking.
- Three types of perspective taking:
  1. You can imagine how the other person perceives an event and how he/she must feel as a result – taking the “imagine other” perspective. Those who take this perspective experience relatively pure empathy that motivates altruistic behaviour.
  2. You can imagine how you would feel if you were in that situation – taking the “imagine self” perspective. Those who take this perspective also experience empathy, but they tend to be motivated by self-interest, which can interfere with prosocial behaviour.
  3. The third type of perspective taking involves fantasy – feeling empathy for a fictional character. In this instance, there is an emotional reaction to the joys, sorrows, and fears of a person (or animal) in a book, movie, or TV program.
- Researchers found that empathy increased helping for members of one’s own group but had a weaker (or no) effect for members of another group.
- Empathy does increase prosocial behaviour, but such effects are stronger for people whom we categorize as members of our own group.
- Having a secure attachment style facilitates an empathic response to the needs of others.
- Parents can be models of empathy and exert powerful effects on their children in this way, demonstrating concern for the well-being of others and showing negative reactions to their difficulties or negative feelings.
- Children also learn from other children and from teachers in school.
- Either because of genetic differences or because of different socialization experiences, women express higher levels of empathy than men.

## FACTORS THAT REDUCE HELPING: SOCIAL EXCLUSION, DARKNESS, AND PUTTING AN ECONOMIC VALUE ON OUR TIME AND EFFORT

- Studies by Twenge et al. showed that when people experience social exclusion, they adopt a cautious attitude toward social relations. They want to have good relations with others, but because they have recently been rejected, they are reluctant to expose

themselves to the risk of even further exclusion. As a result, they are less likely to experience empathy toward others, and less likely to use prosocial actions as a way of winning new friends and social support.

- Darkness has often been linked to disinhibited behaviour, because people feel anonymous.
- Classic studies on deindividuation – a reduced state of self-awareness that encourages wild, impulsive behaviour – indicate that when people feel anonymous, they perform actions they would not perform under other conditions.
- When people are part of a large crowd, they are more likely to obey the norms of that group, and do what others are doing.
- Studies by Zhong have indicated that when people are more anonymous, they act in a more selfish manner.
- When people think about the economic value of their time, they may be less likely to volunteer it to help others.
- Research indicates that to the extent we attach economic value to our time, we may be less likely to donate it to helping others.

#### SU 9.4. THE EFFECTS OF BEING HELPED: WHY PERCEIVED MOTIVES REALLY MATTER

- Research indicates that people who receive help from others sometimes experience negative rather than positive reactions to such assistance.
- When people receive help, their self-esteem can suffer. This is especially likely to occur when the person on the receiving end is lower in status than the helper. In such cases, receiving help drives home the status difference between them.
- More positive reactions to help often occur when the person receiving assistance believes that the help was offered because of positive feelings on the part of the helper or stemmed from personal motivation to help – autonomous motivation.
- When helping seems to stem from conditions that more or less forced the helper to extend assistance – controlled motivation – reactions on the part of the person being helped tend to be far less positive. Both the recipient and the helper have less favourable reactions under these conditions.
- Research by Weinstein and Ryan indicated that the motivation behind helping behaviour is crucial in determining reactions of both the helper and the recipient to such actions.

#### FINAL THOUGHTS: ARE PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND AGGRESSION OPPOSITES?

- The motives behind prosocial behaviour and aggression sometimes overlap and can't be easily separated.
- Research findings indicate that aggression and prosocial behaviour are sometimes used by the same people to gain popularity and status.

- Individuals who behave aggressively can be highly attractive to others if they combine such actions with prosocial ones. Such people are “tough” and assertive, but also possess social skills that allow them to be charming and helpful; they know when to “turn” their tough sides on and off. (“the allure of mean friends”)

## SA SUPPLEMENT: LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO PROSOCIAL ACTS

- When people consider long-term commitments to prosocial behaviour, they usually have to balance self-interest with moral integrity.
- Research shows that there is less empathy for, and willingness to help, AIDS patients who are homosexual or who share needles, than there is for someone who got AIDS through a blood transfusion. The cost of helping such patients is sometimes considered to be too high.
- Turnover is a constant problem in volunteer work and, usually, half of those who volunteer quit within a year.
- Volunteerism is also influenced by dispositional differences, such as variations in empathy, locus of control, and so-called generativity, an adults concern for and commitment to the well-being of future generations.
- Self-interest, moral integrity, and moral hypocrisy are three primary motivations underlying moral behaviour when one is confronted with the choice to help.
- Self-interest refers to the motivation to engage in whatever behaviour provides the greatest satisfaction. Self-interest is often equated with egoism: an exclusive concern with one’s own personal needs and welfare, rather than the needs and welfare of others.
- Another helpful behaviour might be based on moral integrity – the motivation to be moral, and actually engage in moral behaviour. Those motivated to help on this basis often have to sacrifice self-interest.
- A third type of help might be driven by self-interest, but those involved could also be concerned about what others might think. In this case, behaviour is motivated by moral hypocrisy – the motivation to appear moral, while doing one’s best to avoid the cost involved in actually being moral.

# 10: AGGRESSION: ITS NATURE, CAUSES, AND CONTROL

- **Aggression:** Behaviour directed toward the goal of harming another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment.

## SU 10.1. PERSPECTIVES ON AGGRESSION: IN SEARCH OF THE ROOTS OF VIOLENCE

### THE ROLE OF BIOLOGICAL FACTORS: ARE WE PROGRAMMED TO AGGRESS?

- Sigmund Freud held that aggression stems mainly from a powerful death wish (thanatos) that we all possess. This instinct is initially aimed at self-destruction, but is soon directed outward, toward others.
- Konrad Lorenz suggested that aggression springs mainly from an inherited fighting instinct, which ensures that only the strongest males will obtain mates and pass their genes on to the next generation.
- Evolutionary perspective in psychology: While most social psychologists continue to reject the view that human aggression stems largely from innate (i.e. genetic) factors, some now accept the possibility that genetic factors may indeed play some role in human aggression.
- Males tend to be more aggressive toward other males. Females might aggress equally against males and females, or even more frequently against males than other females.
- When men's mating motivation is activated, they become more aggressive toward other men, especially when only other males are present. When females are present, they do not become more aggressive.

### DRIVE THEORIES: THE MOTIVE TO HARM OTHERS

- **Drive theories (of aggression):** Theories suggesting that aggression stems from external conditions that arouse the motive to harm or injure others. The most famous of these is the frustration-aggression hypothesis.
- **The frustration-aggression hypothesis** suggests that frustration leads to the arousal of a drive whose primary goal is that of harming some person or object. Frustration is the strongest, or perhaps the only, cause of aggression.

### MODERN THEORIES OF AGGRESSION: THE SOCIAL LEARNING PERSPECTIVE AND THE GENERAL AGGRESSION MODEL

- **Social learning perspective:** Human beings are not born with a large array of aggressive responses at their disposal. Rather, they must acquire these in much the same way that

they acquire other complex forms of social behaviour: through direct experience or by observing the behaviour of others.

- Whether a specific person will aggress in a given situation depends on many factors, including the person's past experience, the current rewards associated with past or present aggression, and attitudes and values that shape this person's thoughts concerning the appropriateness and potential effects of such behaviour.
- **General aggression model (GAM):** A modern theory of aggression suggesting that aggression is triggered by a wide range of input variables that influence arousal, affective stages, and cognitions.
- According to the GAM, a chain of events that may ultimately lead to overt aggression can be initiated by two major types of input variables: (1) factors relating to the current situation (situational factors) and (2) factors relating to the people involved (person factors).
- According to the GAM, these situational and individual (personal) variables lead to overt aggression through their impact on three basic processes: arousal (they may increase physiological arousal or excitement); affective states (they can arouse hostile feelings and outward signs of these); and cognitions (they can induce individuals to think hostile thoughts or can bring beliefs and attitudes about aggression to mind).
- Depending on individuals' interpretations (appraisals) of the current situation and restraining factors, they then engage either in thoughtful action, or impulsive action.
- According to Bushman and Anderson, repeated exposure to high levels of aggression serves to strengthen knowledge structures related to aggression. As these knowledge structures grow stronger, it is easier for these to be activated by situational or person variables.

## SU 10.2. CAUSES OF HUMAN AGGRESSION: SOCIAL, CULTURAL, PERSONAL, AND SITUATIONAL

### BASIC SOURCES OF AGGRESSION: FRUSTRATION AND PROVOCATION

- **Frustration-aggression hypothesis:** the suggestion that frustration is a very powerful determinant of aggression.
- Evidence suggests that, when frustrated, individuals do not always respond with aggression. They show a variety of reactions, ranging from sadness, despair, depression, and aggression.
- Not all aggression stems from frustration.
- Most social psychologists believe that frustration is simply one of many factors that can potentially lead to aggression.
- Physical or verbal provocation is one of the strongest causes of human aggression.
- Contempt is a very powerful push toward aggression.
- Harsh and unjustified criticism is another powerful form of provocation.

- The more individuals attribute teasing to hostile motives, the more likely they are to respond aggressively.
- Actions by others that somehow threaten our status or public image are important triggers of aggression.
- **Excitation transfer theory**: this theory suggests that arousal occurring in one situation can persist and intensify emotional reactions in later, unrelated situations.

## SOCIAL CAUSES OF AGGRESSION: SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND EXPOSURE TO MEDIA VIOLENCE

- Social rejection is often a powerful trigger for aggression.
- Being rejected by others often leads to increases in aggression against them by the excluded individuals, which, in turn, could lead to even more exclusion.
- Negative emotions do not appear to mediate the effects of rejection on aggression.
- It is possible that rejection by others initiates a hostile cognitive mind-set – it activates cognitive structures in our minds that lead us to perceive ambiguous or neutral actions by others as hostile in nature, and perceive aggression as common in social interactions and as an appropriate kind of reaction.
- Evolutionary theory suggests that a hostile cognitive mind-set or bias might follow from exclusion.
- Rejection by others is a strong antecedent of aggression, and it has such effects because it leads us to perceive others' actions as stemming from hostile motives and a desire on their part to harm us.
- Exposure to media violence may indeed be one factor contributing to high levels of violence in countries where such materials are viewed by large numbers of people.
- Research on exposure to violent television, movies, video games, and music indicates that such materials significantly increase the likelihood of aggressive behaviour by people exposed to them. Such effects are both long term and short term in nature. The magnitude of these effects is large.
- Research results show that the more violent films or television programs participants watched as children, the higher their levels of aggression as teenagers or adults. The same effects are obtained from violence in news programs, violent lyrics in popular music, and by violent video games.
- Research shows that playing violent video games increases aggressive cognitions, aggressive affect, and subsequent aggressive behaviour. It also reduces empathy for others and the tendency to engage in prosocial behaviour. The effects are long-term.
- Research by Przybylski and colleagues indicate that although highly aggressive people are indeed attracted to violent video games, in general, it is not the violent content of these games but rather the opportunity for autonomy and competence they provide that makes them so popular.
- Bushman and Anderson suggest that repeated exposure to media violence can strongly affect cognitions relating to aggression, gradually creating a hostile expectation bias – a strong expectation that others will behave aggressively.

- As a result of exposure to large amount of violent content, individuals become less sensitive to violence and its consequences.
- Individuals who have previously played violent video games frequently show smaller P300 reactions when they view violent images.
- In one South African study, the boys who witnessed community violence seemed highly aggressive, and parents' exposure to real-life violence influenced their own levels of aggression and child-rearing practices negatively.
- Another South African study found that black learners experienced relatively more anxiety during exposure to non-fictional television portrayals of violent events, similar to township realities. White adolescents, however, were more desensitized towards real violence on television, and it did not affect them to the same extent. Black learners enjoyed fictional violence more than their white contemporaries, however.
- Conradie and his colleagues came to the conclusion that the effect of television was not immense. This supports the view that television is only one of many influences on the aggression levels of adolescents.
- A study by Botha found that television exposure had a small effect on his respondents, and that factors such as emotional instability and poor family adjustment – although not proven without doubt – seemed to cause overt and covert aggressiveness in adolescents.

## CULTURAL FACTORS IN AGGRESSION: “CULTURES OF HONOUR”, SEXUAL JEALOUSY, AND THE MALE GENDER ROLE

- **Cultures of honour**: cultures in which there are strong norms indicating that aggression is an appropriate response to insults to one's honour.
- Cultures of honour are still alive and well in many parts of the world.
- Sexual jealousy can be a powerful motivator of aggressive behaviour.
- Sexual jealousy is related to aggression against one's unfaithful partner.
- Evolutionary theory suggests that to lessen sexual jealousy – and avoid the rage it often generates – men engage in mate-retention behaviours – actions designed to prevent a partner from engaging in infidelity. These include keeping a partner under close surveillance, threats of punishment for infidelity, showing affect and care, public signals of possession, and actions designed to drive off or threaten potential rivals. The more attractive a mate, or the younger she is, the more men tend to engage in such actions.
- Evolutionary theory suggests that men's tendency to sexual jealousy and aggression stems from paternal uncertainty – men's inability to know, with absolute certainty, that their children are theirs. This may have led to a tragic tendency to eliminate unfaithful mates – and their offspring.
- The transition to manhood is often marked by special ceremonies, and involves a boost in status. Unfortunately this status can be readily challenged or even lost.
- If “manhood” does confer increased status and other benefits, then threats to it might lead to actions designed to protect or restore and these might involve aggression.

- Research found that when men's manhood is challenged, even mildly, men are more likely to behave aggressively, presumably as a means of reducing or eliminating the threat they experienced.

## PERSONALITY, GENDER, AND AGGRESSION

- The larger the width-to-height ratio of people's faces, the more aggressive they are likely to be.
- **TASS model:** The traits as situational sensitivities model. A view suggesting that many personality traits function in a threshold-like manner, influencing behaviour only when situations evoke them.
- According to the TASS model, the tendency to behave aggressively (sometimes known as trait aggressiveness) will only influence overt behaviour when situational factors are strong enough to activate it. For people high in this trait, even weak provocations will stimulate an aggressive reaction; for people low in this trait, much stronger levels of provocation are required to trigger aggression.
- **Type A behaviour pattern:** a pattern consisting primarily of high levels of competitiveness, time urgency, and hostility.
- **Type B behaviour pattern:** a pattern consisting of the absence of characteristics associated with the type A behaviour pattern.
- Type As are more likely to engage in hostile aggression – aggression in which the prime objective is inflicting some kind of harm on the victim.
- Type As are more likely to engage in such actions as child abuse or spousal abuse.
- Type As are not more likely than Type Bs to engage in instrumental aggression – aggression performed primarily to attain other goals aside from harming the victim, goals such as control of valued resources or praise from others for behaving in a “tough” manner.
- Research findings indicate that people high in narcissism react with exceptionally high levels of aggression when their egos are threatened.
- If esteem-building tactics are overdone and cause children to hold opinions of themselves that are unrealistically high, their tendency to aggress when these views are threatened may be increased.
- On the one hand, males are generally more likely than females both to perform aggressive actions and to serve as the target for such behaviour. On the other hand, the size of these differences appears to vary greatly across situations.
- Males are significantly more likely than females to aggress against others when they have not been provoked in any manner. In situations where provocation is present, and especially when it is intense, such differences tend to disappear.
- Men are more likely than women to engage in various forms of direct aggression, but the size of such differences appears to be decreasing.
- Research findings indicate that while gender differences with respect to indirect aggression are present among children, they may not persist into adulthood.

- Recent findings indicate that for women as well as men, being aggressive can be a social “plus”, conferring high status and appeal on the people who demonstrate it. This is especially true for individuals who combine aggression with high levels of relationship-enhancing actions (high social skills, high levels of extraversion).

## SITUATIONAL DETERMINANTS OF AGGRESSION: THE EFFECTS OF HEAT AND ALCOHOL

- In general, hotter years do produce higher rates of violent crimes, but do not produce increases in property crimes and rape.
- Heat is linked to aggression.
- When people get hot, they become irritable and may be more likely to lash out at others – especially when they have been provoked in some way.
- There may be limits to the relationship between heat and aggression, however – limits deriving from the fact that after prolonged exposure to high temperatures, people become so uncomfortable that they are lethargic and focus on reducing their discomfort.
- In several experiments, participants who consumed substantial amounts of alcohol – enough to make them legally drunk – have been found to behave more aggressively, and to respond to provocations more strongly than those who did not consume alcohol.
- The findings of several studies indicate that alcohol impairs higher-order cognitive functions such as evaluation of stimuli and memory. This may make it harder for individuals to evaluate others’ intentions (hostile or non-hostile) and to evaluate the effects that various forms of behaviour on their part, including aggression, may produce.

## SU 10.3. BULLYING: SINGLING OUT OTHERS FOR REPEATED ABUSE

### WHY DO PEOPLE ENGAGE IN BULLYING?

- Two motives appear to play a key role: the motive to hold power over others and the motive to be part of a group that is “tough” and therefore high in status.
- Research findings revealed that among boys, both the desire to gain power and to be part of powerful groups were significantly related to bullying, while feeling depressed was not.
- For girls, bullying also countered the negative feelings of depression.

### THE CHARACTERISTICS OF BULLIES AND VICTIMS

- Many people who are bullies in one context become victims in other situations, and vice versa.
- Bullies tend to believe that others act the way they do intentionally or because of lasting characteristics. In contrast, victims tend to perceive others as acting as they do at least in part because they are responding to external events or conditions, including how others have treated them.

- Bullies (and also bully-victims) tend to be lower in self-esteem than other people. As a result, they aggress against others to build up their self-image.
- Bullies tend to adopt a ruthless, manipulative approach to life and to dealing with other people. They believe that others are not to be trusted.
- Bullies and bully-victims believe that the best way to respond to bullying is with aggression. They believe, more than other people, that being highly aggressive will bring them high levels of respect.

## REDUCING THE OCCURRENCE OF BULLYING: SOME POSITIVE STEPS

- Bullying must be seen to be a serious problem by all parties involved – teachers, parents, students, prisoners, guards, fellow employees, supervisors, etc.
- If bullying occurs, people in authority must draw attention to it and take an unequivocal stand against it.
- Potential victims must be provided with direct means for dealing with bullying – they must be told precisely what to do and who to see when bullying occurs.
- Outside help is often useful in identifying the cause of bullying and in devising programs to reduce it.

## A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

- Flisher et al. assert that bullying is yet another challenging problem associated with school dropouts.
- Flisher et al. emphasise the fact that the consequences of being bullied are usually severe and include, among others, increased psychosomatic complaints, depression, anxiety, and suicide. Bully/victims might also show signs of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and have the greatest likelihood of continued involvement in bullying behaviour. Bullying also has a negative effect on schooling because of its association with poor academic progress, fear of school, loneliness, and truancy.
- Child maltreatment is an extreme form of bullying. In most cases it involves physical abuse, sexual abuse, physical and emotional neglect, and psychological abuse. Many people who mistreat children have been abused themselves.

## SU 10.4. THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF AGGRESSION: SOME USEFUL TECHNIQUES

### PUNISHMENT: JUST DESSERTS OR DETERRENCE?

- There is a widespread belief that individuals who engage in acts of aggression viewed as inappropriate in their societies deserve to be punished, and that the amount of punishment should be matched to the magnitude of harm that they've caused.

- People are also punished in order to deter them (or others) from engaging in such behaviour in the future.
- Across many different contexts, most people seem to believe that “the punishment should fit the crime”.
- Some kinds of punishment remove dangerous people from society, and in this way, prevent them from repeating their aggressive actions with new victims in the future.
- Punishment can reduce aggression, but only if it meets four basic requirements:
  - It must be prompt.
  - It must be certain to occur.
  - It must be strong.
  - It must be perceived by recipients as justified or deserved.

## SELF-REGULATION: INTERNAL MECHANISMS FOR CONTROLLING AGGRESSION

- Even though aggression can be viewed as a beneficial adaptive behaviour in certain situations, lashing out at others in response to every provocation is definitely not adaptive, and can greatly disrupt social life.
- We possess effective internal mechanisms for restraining our anger and overt aggression. Such mechanisms are called self-regulation (or self-control), and refer to our capacity to regulate many aspects of own behaviour, including aggression.
- Self-control can, like other resources, be depleted by tasks that require its exercise.
- Other research findings indicate that self-control of aggressive impulses does not necessarily involve the use of cognitive resources. When individuals have positive implicit attitudes toward regulating their own emotions, they may be able to restrain aggression almost effortlessly.
- One way in which individuals self-regulate their behaviour so as to avoid aggressing involves thinking prosocial thoughts.
- The more readily people can bring prosocial thoughts to mind when provoked, the less likely they are to behave in an aggressive manner.
- Exposure to other people who show restraint even in the face of strong provocation might help, as would providing training designed to strengthen internal restraints.
- Individuals can be taught to recognize when their cognitive resources are being “stretched”.
- Research by Collings, linking sexually aggressive behaviour with rape supportive beliefs and attitudes (such as the idea that when a woman says no, she actually means yes) should be an important focus point of rape prevention programmes countrywide. His findings indicate that children should not only be warned about dangerous strangers, but should also be informed about issues such as date rape.
- In general, road-related aggression is associated with strong, uncontrolled emotion and is usually directed at another driver without contemplating the possible consequences.

## CATHARSIS: DOES “BLOWING OFF STEAM” REALLY HELP?

- **Catharsis hypothesis:** the view that providing angry people with an opportunity to express their aggressive impulses in relatively safe ways will reduce their tendencies to engage in more harmful forms of aggression.
- Most people seem to believe in the catharsis hypothesis.
- It appears that so-called venting activities such as watching, reading about, or imagining aggressive actions, or even engaging in “play” aggression such as punching a punching bag, are more likely to increase subsequent aggression than to reduce it.
- Anger may actually be increased when individuals think about wrongs they have suffered at the hands of others and imagine ways of harming these people.
- Watching aggressive scenes, listening to songs with aggressive lyrics, or merely thinking about revenge and other activities may activate even more aggressive thoughts and feelings. These, in turn, may colour interpretations of social interactions so that ambiguous actions by others are more likely to be perceived as hostile ones.
- Even if catharsis did occur, the effects would probably be temporary.
- Giving vent to angry feelings may make individuals feel better emotionally. However, research indicates that such effects do not really reduce the long-term tendency to engage in aggressive actions.

## REDUCING AGGRESSION BY BOLSTERING SELF-ESTEEM

- Research indicates that self-affirmation prevents slights to students’ egos from triggering aggression.

# 11: GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS: THE CONSEQUENCES OF BELONGING

## SU 11.1. GROUPS: WHEN WE JOIN... AND WHEN WE LEAVE. THE BENEFITS AND COSTS OF JOINING

- **Group:** a collection of people who are perceived to be bonded together in a coherent unit to some degree.
- **Common-bond groups:** groups that tend to involve face-to-face interaction and in which the individual members are bonded to each other.
- **Common-identity groups:** face-to-face interaction is often absent, and the members are linked together via the category as a whole rather than each other.
- Groups can differ dramatically in terms of their **entitativity** – the extent to which they are perceived as coherent wholes.
- Entitativity can range from, at the low end, a mere collection of individuals who happen to be in the same place at the same time and who have little or no connection with one another, to at the high end, where members of intimate groups such as families share a name, a history, and an identity.
- When people are asked to freely name different types of groups, there is considerable agreement about which types of groups are perceived to be high and low in entitativity. Those groups that are rated as high in entitativity also tend to be groups that people rate as relatively important to them.
- Groups high in entitativity are also perceived as persisting across time, although the specific members may change, whereas those low in entitativity are often not seen as possessing such continuity.
- Groups high in entitativity tend to have the following characteristics:
  - Members interact with one another often, although not necessarily in a face-to-face setting;
  - The group is important in some way to its members;
  - Members share common goals; and
  - They are similar to one another in important ways.
- Highly entitative groups are more likely to be stereotyped than are groups low in entitativity.
- People use different language to describe entitative groups compared to those low in entitativity. Abstract language is used to imply that high entitativity groups are enduring and that they possess distinct characteristics that differentiate them from other groups,

whereas groups low in entitativity are seen as less distinctive and members are less likely to be characterized as sharing attributes.

- It is not the size of a group per se that matters for entitativity. It is behavioural features such as sharing of resources, reciprocating favours among group members, recognition of group authorities, and adherence to group norms that tend to result in greater entitativity rather than structural features of groups.

## GROUPS: THEIR KEY COMPONENTS

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### STATUS: HIERARCHIES IN GROUPS

- Many groups have hierarchies, with members differing in status.
- Sometimes it is an “official position”, and sometimes it is not so explicit.
- Evolutionary psychologists attach considerable importance to status attainment within a group, noting that in many different species, including our own, high status confers important advantages on those who possess it.
- Taller people are held in higher esteem compared to shorter people. They earn more in salary, are perceived as having more skills, and are more likely to be nominated as leader of groups relative to shorter people.
- People who are seen as prototypical – by embodying the group’s central attributes – are particularly likely to be accorded status and be selected as leader of a group.
- Longevity or seniority in a group can result in higher status – to the extent that it is seen as reflective of wisdom or knowledge of ingroup ways.
- Once status within a group is obtained, people with high status actually behave differently than those with lower status. High status are more idiosyncratic and variable in their behaviour than are lower-status group members. There appears to be an awareness of the need to conform to group norms more strongly among those who are junior in a group and therefore have lower status. People with high status report conforming less than people with lower status.
- Newcomers who lack status in a group are more likely to be subjected to punishments if they fail to yield to those with higher status.

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### ROLES: DIFFERENTIATION OF FUNCTIONS WITHIN GROUPS

- **Roles:** the set of behaviours that individuals occupying specific positions within a group are expected to perform.
- Sometimes roles are assigned; in other cases, individuals gradually acquire certain roles without being formally assigned to them.
- To the extent that people internalize their social roles, they can have important implications for psychological well-being. Enacting a role well can lead people to feel that their behaviour reflects their authentic self.

- While roles are not automatic determinants of behaviour, when they are internalized they can affect how we see ourselves, who we identify with, and our actions.
- Once people identify with a role, the norms guide our behaviour and even our emotions.

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#### NORMS: THE RULES OF THE GAME

- Groups powerfully affect the behaviour of their members via norms – implicit rules that inform people about what is expected of them.
- **Feeling rules:** expectations about the appropriate emotions to display or express.
- An important norm that varies considerably across cultures, but can also apply differentially to groups within a culture, is collectivism versus individualism.
- In collectivist groups, the norm is to maintain harmony among group members, even if doing so might entail some personal costs.
- In individualistic groups, the norm is to value standing out from the group and be different from others.
- People differ in how much they value being a member of any particular group.
- When being a member of a particular group is important to our self-concept, we are more likely to be guided by its norms, but ignore or even act contrary to its norms when we are not identified with that group.

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#### COHESIVENESS: THE FORCE THAT BINDS

- **Cohesiveness:** all forces (factors) that cause group members to remain in the group.
- Cohesive groups have a sense of solidarity; they see themselves as homogenous, supportive of ingroup members, cooperative with ingroup members, aim to achieve group goals rather than individual goals, have high morale, and perform better than noncohesive groups.
- The presence of an outgroup or other form of competitive threat tends to increase cohesion and commitment to local community groups.
- The more general threat that your group's future might be in jeopardy can encourage all sorts of groups to advocate actions aimed at creating greater ingroup cohesion.

### THE BENEFITS – AND COSTS – OF JOINING

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#### THE BENEFITS OF JOINING: WHAT GROUPS DO FOR US

- We often gain self-knowledge from belonging to various groups. Group membership becomes central to our self-concept.
- Belonging to groups help us reach our goals, such as prestige.

- People are attracted to groups when they fit our goals – even if those goals are relatively transient. People like being in a group best when that group matches their current goal orientation.
- Joining groups often helps us to accomplish goals we could not achieve alone. As a result of recognizing shared grievances, people can develop a politicized collective identity.

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#### THE COSTS OF GETTING ACCEPTED INTO A GROUP

- When we have put forth considerable effort to achieve membership in a group, we may change our attitudes toward that group in a positive direction in order to justify our effort.

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#### THE COSTS OF MEMBERSHIP: WHY GROUPS SOMETIMES SPLINTER

- Group membership often restricts personal freedom. Members are expected to behave in certain ways.
- Groups often make demands on members' time, energy, and resources, and they must meet these demands or surrender their membership.
- Groups can adopt positions or policies of which some members disapprove.
- Withdrawing from some groups can be a major step with lasting repercussions.
- Groups change, and when they do so to the extent that members feel that they can no longer identify with the group, the final outcome is inevitable: some members will withdraw because, they believe, the group is no longer the same as the one they originally joined.
- **Ideology**: the philosophical and political values that govern a group.
- **Schism**: splintering of a group into distinct factions following an ideological rift among members.

## SU 11.2. EFFECTS OF THE PRESENCE OF OTHERS: FROM TASK PERFORMANCE TO BEHAVIOUR IN CROWDS

### SOCIAL FACILITATION: PERFORMING IN THE PRESENCE OF OTHERS

- The presence of others can affect our performance – sometimes positively and sometimes negatively.
- Zajonc argued that the mere presence of others would only facilitate a well-learned response, but that that it could inhibit a less-practiced or “new” response. The presence of others increases physiological arousal and, as a result, any dominant response will be facilitated. This reasoning became known as the drive theory of social facilitation.

- However, other researchers thought that performance might sometimes be disrupted by the presence of an audience because of apprehension about having their performance evaluated (evaluation apprehension).
- Zajonc's cockroach experiment showed that social facilitation does not require evaluation apprehension to work, at least for some species.

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#### CAN HAVING AN AUDIENCE DISTRACT US?

- **Distraction conflict theory:** A theory suggesting that social facilitation stems from the conflict produced when individuals attempt, simultaneously, to pay attention to the other people present and to the task being performed.

#### SOCIAL LOAFING: LETTING OTHERS DO THE WORK

- **Additive tasks:** tasks for which the group product is the sum or combination of the efforts of individual members.
- On additive tasks, some people will work hard, while others goof off and do less than they would if working alone.
- **Social loafing:** reductions in motivation and effort when individuals work in a group compared to when they work individually.
- Social loafing has been demonstrated in many different task contexts.
- Researchers identified several psychological factors that affect students' social loafing on team projects. First, those who felt "dispensable" to the group were more likely to loaf. Second, the more fairness that was perceived in the group generally, the less likely students were to loaf. When participants had substantial knowledge and skills relating to the task, they felt less dispensable. Dissimilarity from the other group members led participants to feel more dispensable, and thus more likely to loaf.

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#### REDUCING SOCIAL LOAFING: SOME USEFUL TECHNIQUES

- The most obvious way to reduce social loafing involves making the output or effort of each participant readily identifiable.
- Groups can reduce social loafing by increasing group members' commitment to successful task performance.
- Social loafing can be reduced by increasing the apparent importance or value of a task.
- People are less likely to loaf if they are given some standard of performance – either in terms of how much others are doing or their own past performance.

#### EFFECTS OF BEING IN A CROWD

- **Hooliganism:** negative stereotype about how people behave in crowds at sporting events, especially applied to incidents involving England's soccer fans.
- **Deindividuation:** a psychological state characterized by reduced self-awareness brought on by external conditions, such as being an anonymous member of a large crowd.

- Recent research indicates that deindividuation leads to greater normative behaviour, not less.
- Being part of a large crowd and experiencing deindividuation does not necessarily lead to negative or harmful behaviours; it simply increases the likelihood that crowd members will follow the norms of the group.

## SU 11.3. COORDINATION IN GROUPS: COOPERATION OR CONFLICT?

- Cooperation is common in groups working together to attain shared goals.
- Sometimes, group members may perceive their personal interests as incompatible, and instead of coordinating their efforts, may work against each other (conflict), often producing negative results for all.

## COOPERATION: WORKING WITH OTHERS TO ACHIEVE SHARED GOALS

- **Negative interdependence:** a situation where if one person obtains a desired outcome, others cannot obtain it.
- Some goals that people seek simply can't be shared (negative interdependence).
- Sometimes people don't realise that compromise is possible.

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## SOCIAL DILEMMAS: WHERE COOPERATION COULD OCCUR, BUT OFTEN DOESN'T

- **Social dilemmas:** situations in which each person can increase his/her individual gains by acting in one way, but if all (or most) people do the same thing, the outcomes experienced by all are reduced.
- Recent research has revealed that merely thinking about the law as a sanctioning system fosters people's beliefs that others are competitive, that they cannot be trusted, and leads people to make more competitive choices during a prisoner's dilemma game.

## RESPONDING TO AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS: SOME USEFUL TECHNIQUES

- Conflict can sometimes occur when two sides don't really have opposing interests, but they think that they do. Errors concerning the causes of others' behaviour – faulty attribution – can play a critical role in conflict.
- “Feeling misunderstood” by others leads to different responses in various ethnic groups. European Americans showed elevated activity reflective of approach motivation when they were misunderstood, while Asian Americans showed reductions in such activity in this case. Conversely, Asian Americans' brain activation was especially high when they felt understood, whereas European Americans appeared not to be motivated to approach when they felt understood.

- Conflicts within groups are often likely to develop under conditions of scarce resources where group members must compete with each other to obtain them.

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### BARGAINING: THE UNIVERSAL PROCESS

- **Bargaining (negotiation):** A process in which opposing sides exchange offers, counteroffers, and concessions, either directly or through representatives.
- The outcome of bargaining is determined, in part, by the specific tactics adopted by the bargainers. Many of these are designed to reduce the opponent's aspirations. Tactics for accomplishing this goal include:
  - Beginning with an extreme initial offer – one that is very favourable to the side proposing it;
  - The “big-lie” technique – convincing the other side that one's break-even point is much higher than it is; and
  - Convincing the other side that you can go elsewhere and get even better terms.
- Another determinant of the outcome of bargaining involves the overall orientation of bargainers to the process. People taking part in negotiations can approach such discussions from either of two perspectives. In one, they can view the negotiations as “win-lose” situations in which gains by one side are necessarily linked with losses for the other. In the other, they can approach negotiations as potential “win-win” situations, in which the interests of the two sides are not necessarily incompatible and in which the potential gains of both sides can be maximized. This approach produces more favourable results in the long run.
- Tactics for reaching integrative agreements:
  - **Broadening the pie:** Available resources are increased so that both sides can obtain their major goals.
  - **Nonspecific compensation:** One side gets what it wants; the other is compensated on an unrelated issue.
  - **Logrolling:** Each party makes concessions on low-priority issues in exchange for concessions on issues it values more highly.
  - **Bridging:** Neither party gets its initial demands, but a new option that satisfies the major interests of both sides is developed.
  - **Cost-cutting:** One party gets what it desires, and the costs to the other party are reduced in some manner.
- Researchers found that expressing anger in a negotiation resulted in greater concessions from European Americans, but smaller concessions from Asian Americans, due to the effects of cultural norms.

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### SUPERORDINATE GOALS: WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

- Members of groups in conflict often perceive members of their own group (us) as quite different from, and usually better than, people belonging to other groups (them).

- These tendencies magnify differences, and play a role in the occurrence and persistence of conflicts.
- These tendencies can be countered through the induction of superordinate goals – goals that both sides seek, and that tie their interests together rather than driving them apart.

## SU 11.4. PERCEIVED FAIRNESS IN GROUPS: ITS NATURE AND EFFECTS

### BASIC RULES FOR JUDGING FAIRNESS: DISTRIBUTIVE, PROCEDURAL, AND TRANSACTIONAL JUSTICE

- We rarely have all the information needed to judge whether we have been treated fairly.
- Perceived fairness is subject to many forms of bias.
- In general, we judge fairness by focusing on three distinct aspects/rules:
  - **Distributive justice (fairness)**: refers to individuals' judgements about whether they are receiving a fair share of available rewards – a share proportionate to their contributions to the group or any social relationship.
  - **Procedural justice**: Judgments concerning the fairness of the procedures used to distribute available rewards among group members.
  - **Transactional justice**: Refers to the extent to which people who distribute rewards explain or justify their decisions and show respect and courtesy to those who receive the rewards.

## SU 11.5. DECISION MAKING BY GROUPS: HOW IT OCCURS AND THE PITFALLS IT FACES

### THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: HOW GROUPS ATTAIN CONSENSUS

- A large body of evidence indicates that groups are more likely to adopt extreme positions than if its members made those same decisions alone.
- Groups show a pronounced tendency to shift toward views that are more extreme than the ones with which they initially began (**group polarization**).
- Effects of group polarization: whatever the initial leaning or preference of a group prior to its discussions, this preference is strengthened during the group's deliberations. As a result, groups make more extreme decisions than individuals.
- Groups move toward riskier alternatives as they discuss important issues (risky shift), but only where the initial preference of the group leaned in that direction.
- Two factors are involved in the move toward increasingly extreme views and decisions:

- Social comparison – being “better” than other group members means holding views that are more prototypical of the group’s overall preference, but even more so.
- As a result of hearing arguments that favour the group’s initial preference, members shift, increasingly, toward the majority’s view.

## THE DOWNSIDE OF GROUP DECISION MAKING

### GROUPTHINK: WHEN COHESIVENESS IS DANGEROUS

- **Groupthink:** The tendency of the members of highly cohesive groups to assume that their decisions can’t be wrong, that all members must support the group’s decisions strongly, and that information contrary to it should be ignored.
- Once groupthink develops, groups become unwilling to change their decisions, even when initial outcomes suggest that those decisions were very poor ones.
- Two factors contribute to the occurrence of groupthink:
  - A very high level of cohesiveness among group members and the fact that supportive group members in the leader’s “inner circle” exert a disproportional impact on the ultimate decision making.
  - Emergent group norms – norms suggesting that the group is infallible, morally superior, and because of these factors, there should be no further discussion of the issues at hand; the decision has been made, and the only valid response is to support it as strongly as possible.
- Criticism from outsiders is viewed with suspicion and attributed negative motives, and is therefore largely ignored, and may even strengthen group cohesiveness.

### THE FAILURE TO SHARE INFORMATION UNIQUE TO EACH MEMBER

- Decision-making groups do not always pool their resources – share information and ideas unique to each member.
- The decisions made by groups tend to reflect shared information.
- The presence of dissent in groups can be critical; it can lead members to consider nonshared information and this improves decision quality.

### BRAINSTORMING: IDEA GENERATION IN GROUPS

- Brainstorming does not on the whole result in more creative ideas being generated than if the same people worked alone.
- Dugosh and Paulus found that exposure to a larger quantity of ideas resulted in more ideas being generated by participants. Moreover, participants who were led to believe they were being exposed to people-generated ideas, as opposed to computer-selected ideas, produced more high-quality ideas – presumably because participants felt the need to be as creative as those “other people”.

- Dissent or debating competing views are widely valued as stimuli for creative ideas.