SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY II

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9.00
SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY II

• Self Concept
  Above Average
  False Consensus
  Cognitive Dissonance

• Impressions of Others

• Cultural Differences

• Autism
ENHANCING OUR VIEWS OF OURSELVES

• most U.S. college students rate themselves as better than average students
• 1 million high-school students rated their leadership; 28% average; 70% above average; 2% below average; 60% in top 10% in ability to get along with others
• 94% of college instructors rated themselves as better than average teachers
ENHANCING OUR VIEWS OF OURSELVES

• self-serving attributional bias
  success reflects our traits, not situation

• did well on tests of sensory or perceptual discrimination, social sensitivity, competitive game - me (poorly, the situation)

• can be extended to family, social and political groups, sports teams
Constructing social reality

• In the final game of the season, an undefeated Princeton played Dartmouth. It was a hard fought game, and Princeton won.

• School newspapers had totally different accounts.

• Hastorf and Cantril (1954) showed a film of the game to students at each of the two campuses.

• Princeton students judged the game as dirty, thought Dartmouth started the dirty play, and “saw” Dartmouth commit twice as many penalties.

• Dartmouth students saw both as blameworthy, and “saw” an equal number of penalties on each side.
Realistic Depression & Illusory Optimism

- depressed and non-depressed students given tasks that varied in degree of contingency (Alloy & Abramson, 1979)
- estimate degree of contingency between response (button presses) and outcome (green light going on)
- depressed students more accurate, non-depressed students overestimated contingency when outcomes were desired, underestimated when outcomes were undesired
False Consensus
(Ross et al., 1977)

• People choosing to engage in a behavior believe that their choice is more common than do people making the opposite choice

• Carry around sign on campus “Eat at Joe’s” for 30 min - agree, 62% of others will do so; disagree, 33% of others will do so

• Example: Teenage smokers estimate higher rates of smoking than non-smokers (Sherman et al., 1983); domestic abusive men estimate that about 28% of men have violently thrown things at partner (vs. 12%) (Neighbors et al., 2010)
WHAT HAPPENS TO THE CAR?

• Zimbardo (1980)
• two identical cars - one in upper-middle class Palo Alto; one in tough Bronx area
• Bronx - no license plate; hood up; stripped within a day
• Palo Alto - untouched for a week - smashed a window - stripped within an hour
Use the force for good not evil. . . .

Can you increase compliance with a prosocial request?

Is this ad persuasive?
What is presented as the norm?

Help prevent litter and illegal dumping.
Social Norms & Littering

![Graph showing the relationship between the number of pieces of litter in the environment and the percentage of people who litter. The x-axis represents the number of pieces of litter (0 to 16), and the y-axis represents the percentage of people who litter (10% to 41%). There are data points for different sample sizes (60, 59, 59, 60, 60, 60).]
Using norms to influence recycling

descriptive norms (what most others do)

injunctive norms (what most others approve or disapprove of)

See recycling
Approve recycling
Disapprove a person who does not
25.3% increase in recycling amount
Attitudes vs. Actions

• Daffodil Days - buy a daffodil - 4-day campus event to benefit American cancer Society
• 251 Cornell students
  83% predicted they would buy at least one flower vs. 56% of peers
  43% actually bought a daffodil
COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

- Leon Festinger, 1957
- discrepancy between attitudes and action (behavior) - conflict
- do a boring task (packing & unpacking spools in a tray, turning many screws for a quarter turn)
- get $1 or $20 to lie and tell next person that task was interesting, worthwhile
- really, how was task?
How enjoyable was the task?

- Did not lie
- Paid $20 to lie
- Paid $1 to lie

Image by MIT OpenCourseWare.
COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

• *post-decisional*

Jack Brehm, 1956, carted wedding gifts to lab
rate how much you want desk lamp, toaster, stopwatch, radio, etc.
select between two that were equally desirable
rate again - upgraded the chosen item, downgraded rejected item (unless examiner picks for them)

• *colleges, cars vs. trucks, CDs*
COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

- effort
courses

1959 - to qualify for a research study, some women were required to read aloud obscene words or mild words to male experimenter - then listened to boring lecture on mating habits of lower animals - lecture rated better by difficult qualification

why did I do that painful thing?
First Impressions

How powerful?

How accurate?
First Impressions

How powerful?

How accurate?

Operational Definition
Norman & Goldberg (1966), University of Michigan

• Students rate people’s personality on first day of class before introduction
• Correlation with self-rating, especially “sociable” and “responsible”

Kenny (1988)

• 250 students, divided into 4 groups who did not know each other, had not spoken together
• Rated - *sociable*, good-natured, *responsible*, calm, intellectual (traits of extraversion, conscientiousness) - good agreement with self ratings
• But how good are we at rating ourselves?
Self ratings? (Levesque & Kenny, 1993)
• 4 strangers rate each other on 5 traits
• Meet in pairs, videotaped
• Judges watched tape, rated extroversion - time talking, arm movements
• First impressions correlated strongly with videotape ratings for selves & others
Nalani Ambady (1993) - “thin slices”
- Videotaped 13 graduate TAs
- 3 random 10 sec clips, 30 sec per TA
- Showed silent clips to students
- 13 ratings - accepting, active, competent, confident
- Correlated global rating with actual end-of-semester rating with students
- + 0.76 correlation
- 15 sec? 6 sec?
- listen to 20 secs of physician speaking during routine office visit, above-chance prediction of which were sued for malpractice
High school teachers?

Better teachers?

5 students - 1 “teacher” - teachers prepared brief math lesson - students took test - strangers rate 10 sec videos of teachers

High rating correlated with high test-scores
First Impressions

Prior information (Schema)
MIT 1950
Guest lecturer
  - 50% students
  - “People who know him consider him to be a (very warm or rather cold) person, industrious, critical, practical, and determined.”
guest appears, leads 20-minute discussion
Evaluation (very warm)
  - Rated lecturer better
  - Took more part in discussion

First impressions hard to change because new information is interpreted to be consistent with already formed impressions
First Impressions

Prior information
self-fulfilling prophecy

• elementary school, gave test to students
• told teacher who would have good/bad year
• end of year: high scores > low scores
First Impressions

Prior information
self-fulfilling prophecy

• elementary school, gave test to students
• told teacher who would have good/bad year
• end of year: high scores > low scores
Physical Attractiveness

Physically attractive people judged more intelligent, competent, sociable and moral

5th grade teachers given report cards and photographs of children they did not know

– Rate intelligence and achievement
– Attractive children rated brighter and more successful than unattractive children with identical report cards
Physical Attractiveness

Child’s misbehavior
• Environmental circumstances if more attractive
  personality if less attractive

Court cases, comparable crimes
• Shorter sentences if more attractive
• Longer sentences if less attractive
Halo Effect

- global evaluation about a person bleeds over to a specific trait
  
  *she is likable, so she is intelligent*
Halo Effect

• Nisbett & Wilson, 1977 -“cover story” - students told study was to examine teacher evaluations; was it dependent on amount of exposure (cover)?

• 2 groups saw videos of lecturer with strong Belgian accent - answered questions in a warm & friendly manner or a cold and distant manner

• rated warm version as more attractive, likeable mannerisms, & less accent - without being aware of it (celebrity marketing?)
Stereotypes

• In addition to asking “Why did he do this?” we also ask “What kind of person is he?”

• To answer this question, we rely on short cuts and heuristics

• These short cuts are necessary, but also can lead to stereotyping, or using simplified social schemas to define whole groups of people.

• Stereotypes have bi-directional effects
Self-fulfilling prophecies

Automatic activation of negative stereotype

Negative stereotype confirmed

Treat target poorly

Target behaves poorly in response
Beauty in the *ear* of the beholder?

Step 1

Initial impression

10 min conversation

impression

Snyder, Tanke, & Bersheid (1977)
Beauty in the ear of the beholder?

Female Conversion
how animated?
enthusiastic?
enjoying herself?

Snyder, Tanke, & Bersheid (1977)
Beauty in the ear of the beholder?

- In the “attractive” condition, women were seen as more sociable, poised, humorous, socially adept
- Participants changed their partner’s behavior with their expectations – what had been only a reality in the minds of the men became a reality in the behavior of the women they interacted with
- Participants then formed an impression of the women based on that (changed) behavior

Snyder, Tanke, & Bersheid, (1977)
WEIRD societies – Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic

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Models of Self
Communities’ ideas about being a person and the social practices, situations, and institutions of everyday life that represent and foster these ideas.

Independent Models
- A person is fundamentally separate from others, stable, and consistent.
- Actions are under personal control and guided by preferences and needs.
- Gives priority to personal needs over group goals.
- Stands out, is unique, expresses the self.
- Values feeling good about oneself and high arousal, excitement.

Interdependent Models
- A person is fundamentally connected to others.
- Actions are primarily guided by social norms and roles.
- Subordinates personal needs and beliefs to maintain group harmony.
- Meets obligations, expectations, norms, fits in.
- Values self-reflection, self-criticism and low arousal, calm.
Relative vs. Absolute Size

Look at target stimulus - taken away - see new empty Box, draw line of either equal relative size or absolute Size

Japanese subjects more accurate for relative size
American subjects more accurate for absolute size

How malleable?
(a) Participants were shown a square frame with a vertical line like the one at the top. They were then shown a new square frame of a different size and were asked to draw a line that was identical to the first line in either absolute length (absolute task), like the blue line at the bottom left, or in proportion to the surrounding frame (relative task), like the red line at the bottom right.

(b) The error scores show that American participants were more accurate in the absolute task than the relative task, whereas Japanese were more accurate in the relative task, suggesting that Japanese were paying more attention to the frame than Americans were.


Mean absolute error (mm)

Japanese in Japan
Americans in Japan
Japanese in America
Americans in America

Greater Brain Activation to Support Culturally Non-Preferred Task

- East Asians
- Americans

Relative Task vs. Absolute Task
Preference for Uniquenesses
(Kim & Markus, 1999)

American    Korean

Liking

6.5
6.0
5.5
5.0
4.5
4.0
3.5
3.0

Unique Subfigures    Minority Subfigures
1+4 Condition

or
2+3 Condition

or

Image by MIT OpenCourseWare.
Unique Pen Choice: International Airport
(Kim & Markus, 1999) *

Proportion of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of Respondents</th>
<th>Minority Pen</th>
<th>Majority Pen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Asian</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European American</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Kim and Markus (1999)
North Americans referred to the attributes of the target fish; the Japanese referred to the background and contextual information as well as the target fish attributes.

(a) Still photo from animated underwater vignette. (b) Focal fish previously seen viewed against previously seen background (Left), no background (Center), or novel background (Right). (c) Recognition accuracy for previously seen objects. Accuracy rates of Japanese participants varied significantly as a function of background conditions.

Courtesy of American Psychological Association. Used with permission.

(a) Participants were presented with a target object and two groups of four objects, and were asked to judge which group the target object was most similar to. In this example, all the objects in group 2 share the same stem as the target object, whereas the members in group 1 share a large number of features with the target, although no one feature is shared by all the members. Thus, whereas the group 2 shares a unidimensional rule with the target, group 1 is holistically more similar to the target.

(b) European Americans much more often perceived similarities based on the unidimensional rule, but East Asians more frequently perceived similarities based on holistic judgments of family resemblance.
Fundamental Attribution Error

- disposition (personality) vs. situation
- more emphasis on interpreting actions in terms of dispositions in US
- more emphasis on interpreting actions in terms of situation in India, China, Japan, Korea
- East Asians less susceptible to attractiveness bias than Westerners
AUTISM

• prevalence 1/110-140 – dramatic increase in recent years (awareness?)
• diagnosed by age 3
• 4 males/1 female
• social cognition different (impaired?)
• communication/language difficulty in many cases
• stereotyped, repetitive movements
Fig 1. Sample scanpaths from phase 1 of the experiment. Participants were instructed to examine the faces in any manner they selected.

**Fig 3.** Sample scanpaths from phase II of the experiment. Participants were instructed to identify the emotion portrayed in each face.

Source: Pelphrey, K., N. Sasson, et al. "Visual Scanning of Faces in Autism." *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 32, no. 4 (2002). © Springer. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see [http://ocw.mit.edu/fairuse](http://ocw.mit.edu/fairuse).
Brain Size Differences are Maximal in First Few Years of Life in Autism

![Graph showing brain size differences over age](http://www.sciencedirect.com)
Autism: Theory of Mind Deficit

- typical 4 year olds
- IQ matched 6-12 year olds with autism
- false picture control (photo of object in a location, object moved, still in picture?)

![Graph showing percentage passing for false belief and false picture tests for autistic individuals and normal 4-year-olds.](Image by MIT OpenCourseWare.)
Reduced social brain activation during theory of mind attribution in ASD

TOM > Random Displays

Source: Castelli, F., C. Frith, et al. "Autism, Asperger Syndrome and Brain Mechanisms for the Attribution of Mental States to Animated Shapes." Brain (2002). © Springer. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see http://ocw.mit.edu/fairuse.
INCONGRUENT > CONGRUENT

TYPICAL

AUTISM