

Social Psychology

PSY 1000:
Introduction to Psychology

Social Psychology

- **Social psychology** is concerned with the way individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others
 - Person perception
 - Attribution processes
 - Self
 - Altruism
 - Aggression
 - Interpersonal attraction
 - Attitudes
 - Behavior in groups
 - Conformity and obedience

Person Perception: Forming Impressions of Others

- **Person perception** is the process of forming impressions of others
- **Effects of physical appearance**
 - We assume that attractive people are more sociable, friendly, poised, warm, and well adjusted (...but the reality is that there is little relationship)
 - Attractive people are overrepresented in the media (and are presented in a positive light)
 - Attractive people are considered to be more competent than less attractive people...which leads to attractive people getting better jobs and earning higher salaries

Person Perception:
Forming Impressions of Others

- **Schemas** are cognitive structures that guide information processing
 - **Social schemas** are organized clusters of ideas about categories of social events and people
 - Ex. What is supposed to happen on a first date?
- **Stereotypes** are widely held beliefs that people have certain characteristics because of their membership in a particular group
 - Some of the most common are based on sex, age, & race
 - Overgeneralized and resistant to new information
 - Allow for efficient processing but with a cost in accuracy
 - Related to prejudice and discrimination

Person Perception:
Forming Impressions of Others

- **Subjectivity in person perception**
 - We tend to interpret ambiguous behavior as being consistent with our expectations
 - Ex. We might perceive a woman who objects during a meeting as "aggressive", whereas a man engaging in the same behavior is "assertive"
- **Evolutionary perspectives**
 - Many of our biases were adaptive in the past
 - Our tendency to immediately classify individuals as members of our ingroup (i.e., one of "us") or an outgroup (i.e., one of "them") allowed us to separate friends from enemies very quickly

Attribution Processes:
Explaining Behavior

- **Attributions** are inferences about the causes of events, others' behavior, and our own behavior
 - **Internal attributions** ascribe the cause of behavior to personal dispositions, traits, abilities, and feelings
 - **External attributions** ascribe the cause of behavior to situational demands and environmental constraints



**Attribution Processes:
Explaining Behavior**

- Biases in attributions
 - **Fundamental attribution error** refers to observers' bias in favor of internal attributions in explaining others' behavior
 - Ex. Why was Bob late to class today?
 - **Defensive attribution** is a tendency to blame victims for their misfortune, so that one feels less likely to be victimized in a similar way
 - Related to "belief in a just world"
 - **Self-serving bias** is the tendency to attribute one's successes to personal factors and one's failures to situational factors

Self as a Social Object

- Self-esteem is the degree to which we have a positive or negative attitude about ourselves
- Positive illusions (e.g., we think we are better than we really are)
- Self-objectification is the tendency to see oneself as an object in the eyes of others
 - Women performed more poorly on a math test after trying on a swimsuit than after trying on a sweater
- Stereotype threat is the self-fulfilling fear of being judged on the basis of a negative stereotype about one's group
- Social comparisons: upward vs. downward

Altruism

- Altruism is an unselfish interest in helping someone else
- Is altruism a puzzle to be solved or a natural expression of human nature?
 - Evolutionary theories often suggest that organisms should be selfish...but there are many instances where individuals behave somewhat unselfishly
 - Egoism is when people give to someone else in order to ensure reciprocity, gain self-esteem, create/maintain a certain image, or avoid negative consequences for failing to help (e.g., guilt)
- Empathy is when we understand the emotional state of someone else (linked with altruism)
- Bystander effect is the tendency for an individual who observes an emergency to help less when other people are present
 - video
 - Diffusion of responsibility
 - Murder of Kitty Genovese (1963); rape in St. Paul caught on camera with 10 witnesses (2007); rape in Richmond, CA with more than a dozen witnesses (2009)

Defining Aggression

- **Aggression**

- Any behavior intended to harm another person who is motivated to avoid the harm

- **An intentional behavior**

- Not angry feelings
 - Not thoughts of harming someone

- **Intent is to harm**

- Not accidental harm
 - Not assertiveness or playfulness

- **The victim wants to avoid harm**



- **Example of aggression: Shooting someone who is running away from you**

- **Not aggression: A doctor gives a painful shot**



Types of Aggression

- **Hostile aggression**

- Hot, impulsive
 - Often in direct response to something
 - Desire is to hurt someone

- e.g., crimes of passion, spreading vicious rumors about ex after being dumped, punching someone who bumps into you

- **Instrumental aggression**

- Cold, premeditated
 - A means to an end

- Often to attain some kind of goal (e.g., money, justice)

- e.g., murder-for-hire, spanking a child to prevent future bad behavior

Views of Aggression

- **Biological Influences**

- Evolutionary view
 - Genetic basis
 - Neurobiological factors (e.g., testosterone)

- **Psychological Factors**

- Frustration
 - Aversive conditions (e.g., temperature, smoke)
 - Observational learning (e.g., watching others behave aggressively)
 - Self-esteem

- **Sociocultural Factors**

- Cultural variations and the culture of honor
 - Media violence
 - Gender

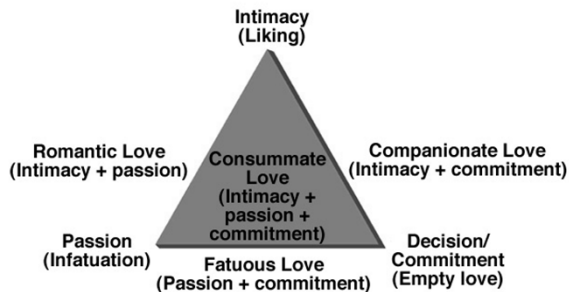
Close Relationships: Liking and Loving

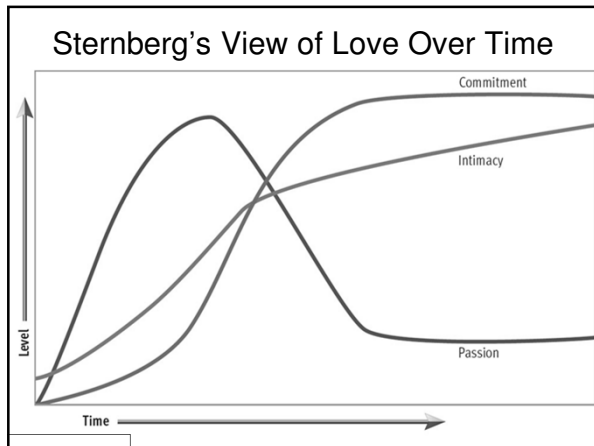
- Key factors in attraction
 - **Physical attractiveness** is extremely important in the early stages of a relationship
 - **Matching hypothesis** proposes that men and women of approximately equal physical attractiveness are likely to select each other as partners
 - **Video**
 - **Similarity**: couples tend to be similar in age, race, religion, social class, education, intelligence, physical attractiveness, values, and attitudes
 - **Reciprocity** involves liking those who show that they like you
 - **Romantic ideals** concern how closely our romantic partners match our ideals
 - We tend to evaluate our partners more positively than they view themselves

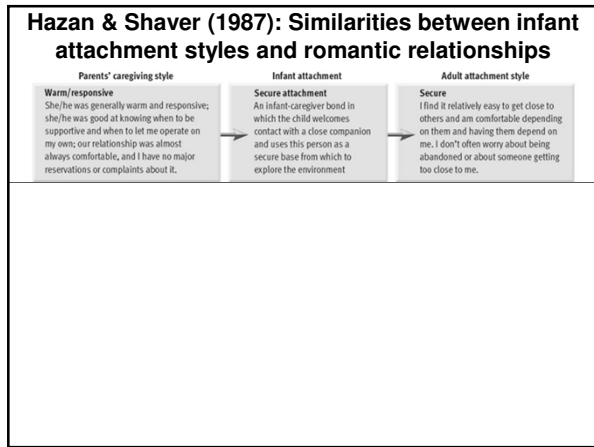
Close Relationships: Liking and Loving

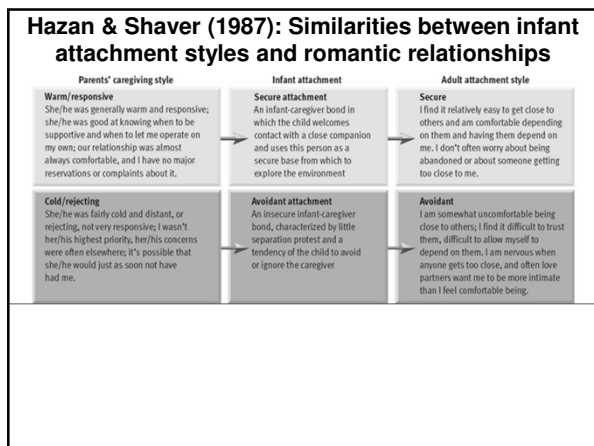
- Sternberg (1988): 3 components of love
 - **Passion** is a complete absorption in another that includes sexual feelings and intense emotion
 - **Intimacy** refers to warmth, closeness, and sharing in a relationship
 - **Commitment** is an intention to maintain a relationship in spite of the difficulties and costs that may arise

Sternberg - 3 Components of Love







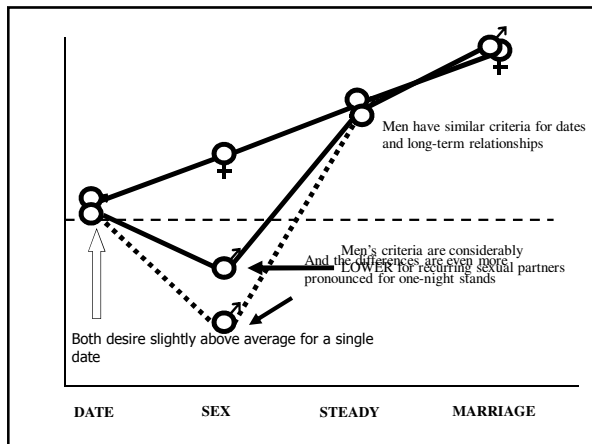


Hazan & Shaver (1987): Similarities between infant attachment styles and romantic relationships

Parents' caregiving style	Infant attachment	Adult attachment style
Warm/ responsive She/he was generally warm and responsive; she/he was good at knowing when to be supportive and when to let me operate on my own; our relationship was almost always comfortable, and I have no major reservations or complaints about it.	Secure attachment An infant-caregiver bond in which the child welcomes contact with a close companion and uses this person as a secure base from which to explore the environment	Secure I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't often worry about being abandoned or about someone getting too close to me.
Cold/rejecting She/he was fairly cold and distant, or rejecting, not very responsive; I wasn't her/his highest priority, her/his concerns were often elsewhere; it's possible that she/he would just as soon not have had me.	Avoidant attachment An insecure infant-caregiver bond, characterized by little separation protest and a tendency of the child to avoid or ignore the caregiver	Avoidant I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others; I find it difficult to trust them, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I am nervous when anyone gets too close, and often love partners want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.
Ambivalent/inconsistent She/he was noticeably inconsistent in her/his reactions to me, sometimes warm and sometimes not; she/he had her/his own agenda, which sometimes got in the way of her/his responsiveness and responsiveness to my needs; she/he definitely loved me but didn't always show it in the best way.	Anxious/ambivalent attachment An insecure infant-caregiver bond, characterized by strong separation protest and a tendency of the child to resist contact initiated by the caregiver, particularly after a separation	Anxious/ambivalent I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me or won't want to stay with me. I want to merge completely with another person, and this desire sometimes scares people away.

Minimum Relationship Standards

- What is the minimum percentile of intelligence you would accept in considering someone for...
 - A DATE
 - A RECURRING SEXUAL PARTNER
 - A ONE-NIGHT STAND
 - A STEADY DATING PARTNER
 - A MARRIAGE PARTNER
- Kenrick, Sadalla, Groth, & Trost (1990)
Kenrick, Groth, Trost & Sadalla (1993)

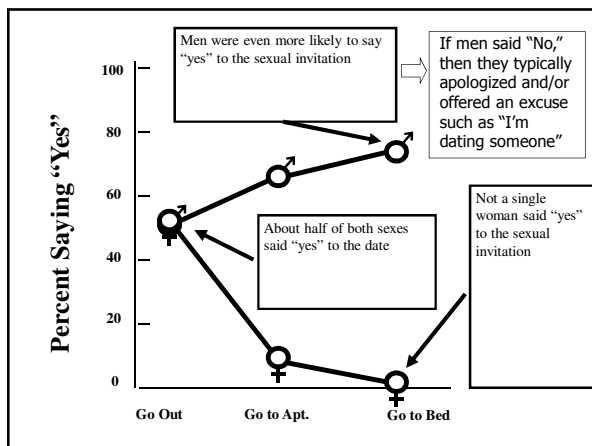


Results of Kenrick Studies

- These results suggest females increase selectivity as the probability of pregnancy increases
- And males are selective for long term relationships where they commit resources
- But males will be less selective if given the opportunity for a low investment reproductive opportunity

Short-Term Sexual Encounters

- Clark & Hatfield (1989): Students were approached by another student of the other sex, who said...
- "I have been noticing you around campus and I find you very attractive."
- This was followed by one of three invitations:
 - "Would you go out with me tonight?"
 - "Would you come over to my apartment?"
 - "Would you go to bed with me?"

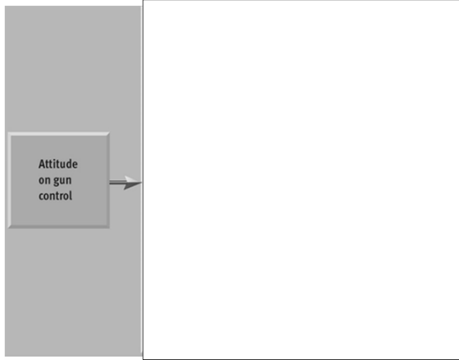


Close Relationships: Liking and Loving

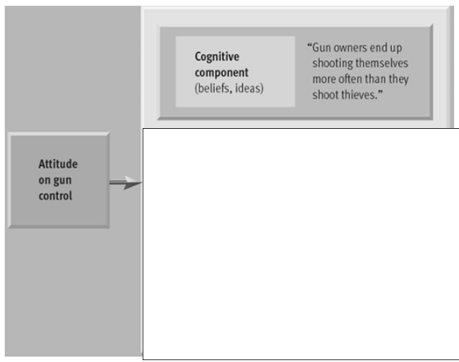
● Evolutionary perspectives

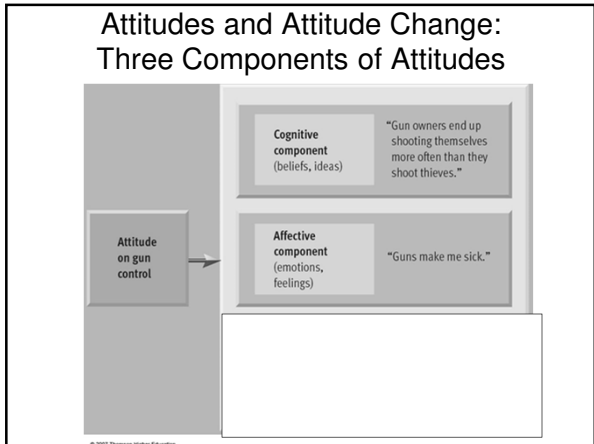
- Men value youth and beauty
- Women value ambition, social status, and financial potential
- Tactics used by men: display resources, display sophistication, display strength/athleticism, show off
- Tactics used by women: wear makeup, keep clean and groomed, wear stylish clothes, wear jewelry, wear sexy clothing

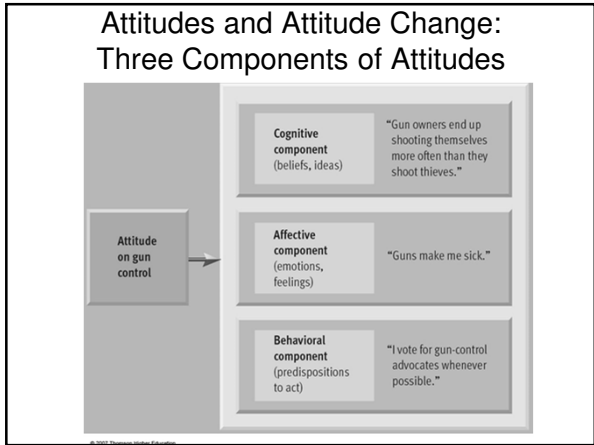
Attitudes and Attitude Change: Three Components of Attitudes

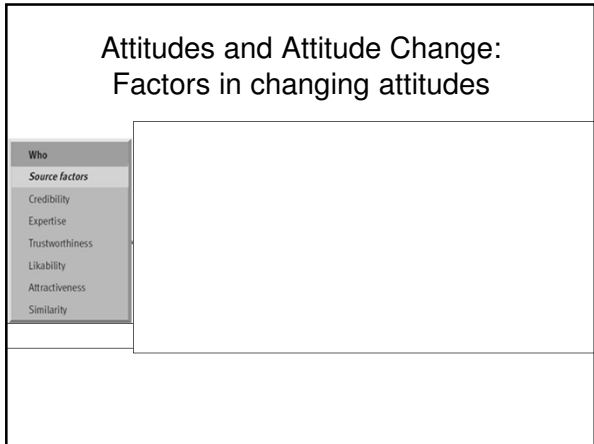


Attitudes and Attitude Change: Three Components of Attitudes

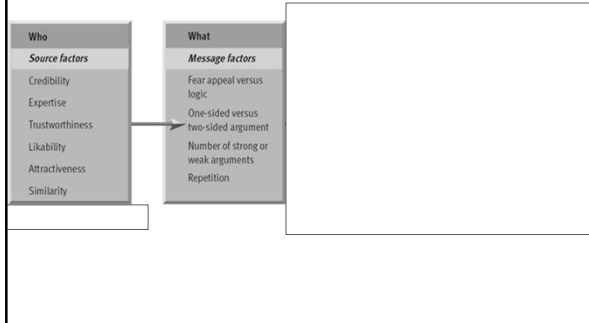




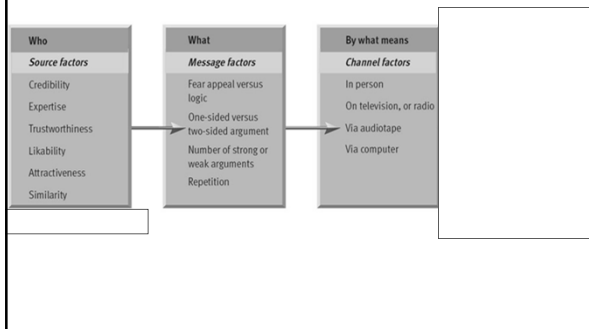




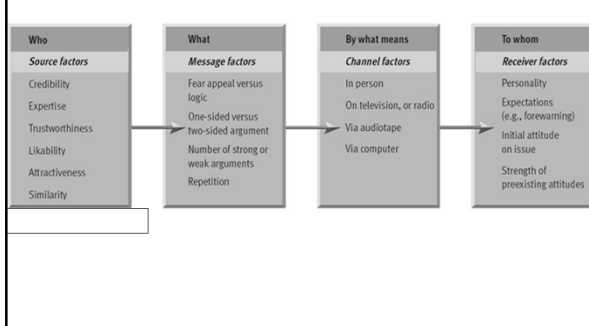
Attitudes and Attitude Change: Factors in changing attitudes



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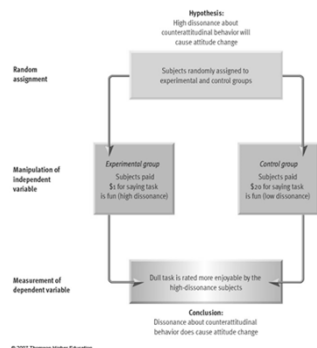


Attitudes and Attitude Change: Theories of Attitude Change

- Learning theory
 - **Evaluative conditioning** consists of efforts to transfer the emotion attached to a UCS to a new CS
 - Ex. Hiring a celebrity to advertise your product
 - A form of classical conditioning
 - **Operant conditioning**: our attitudes are generally strengthened when others agree with us
 - **Observational learning**: we learn attitudes from watching the behavior of other individuals

Attitudes and Attitude Change: Theories of Attitude Change

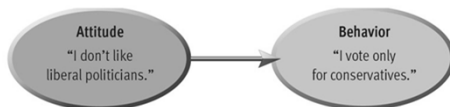
- Dissonance theory
 - Festinger & Carlsmith (1959)
 - Dissonance promotes attitude change in order to be consistent

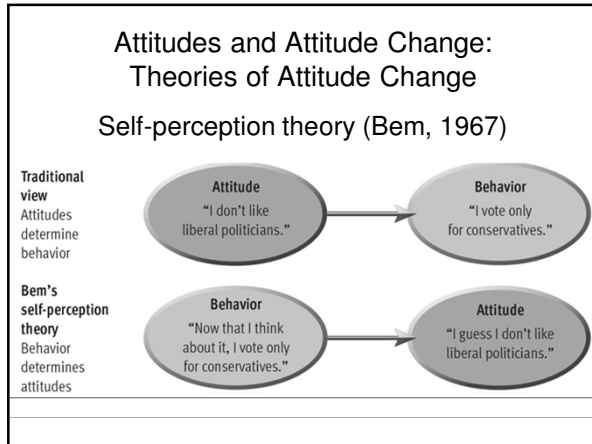


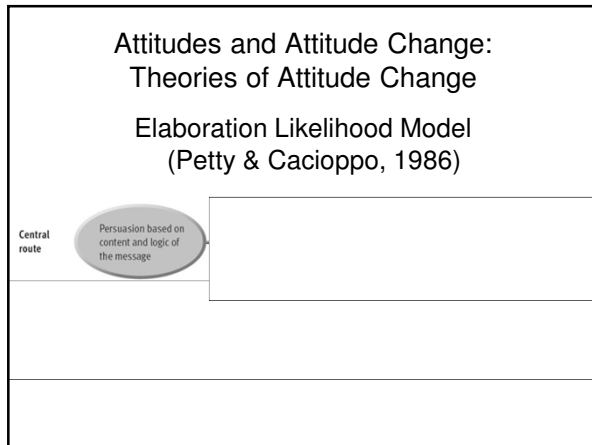
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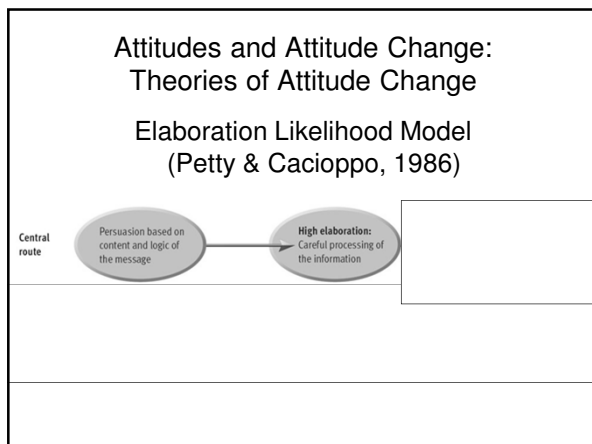
Self-perception theory (Bem, 1967)

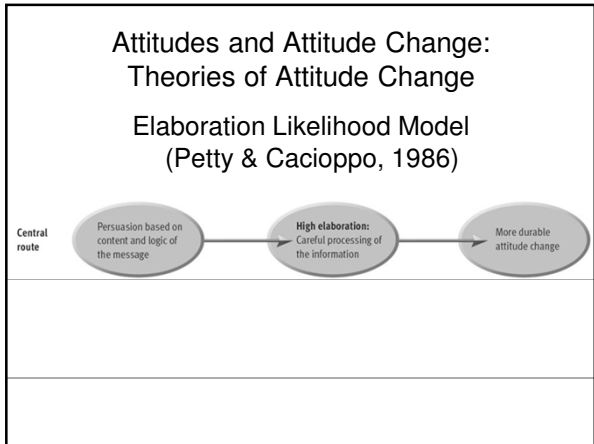
Traditional view
Attitudes determine behavior

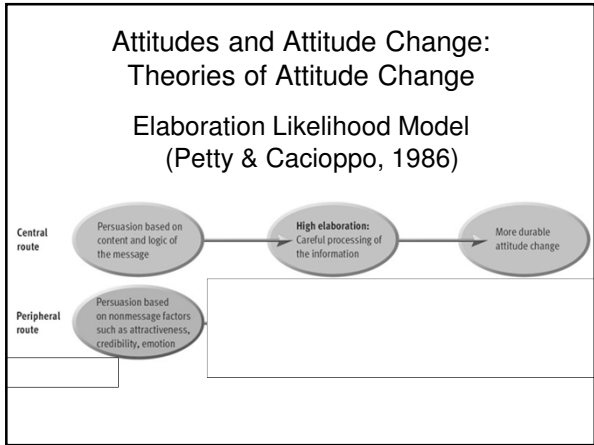


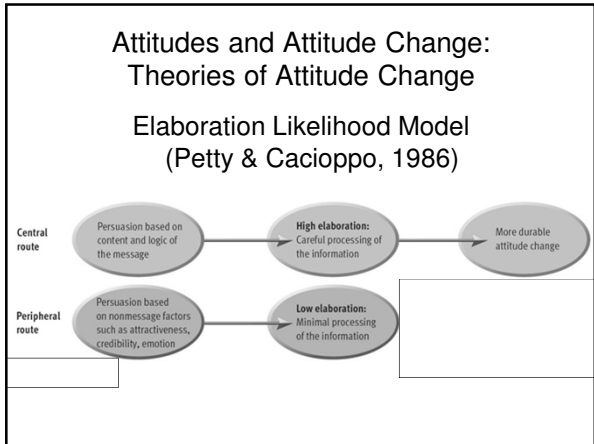


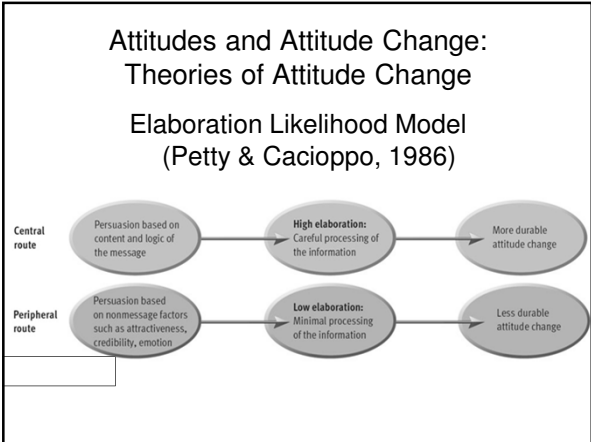












- ### Persuasion Techniques Based on Commitment and Consistency
- Foot-in-the-Door Technique: Start with small request to gain eventual compliance with larger request (e.g., Door-to-door vacuum cleaner salesmen)
 - Low-Ball Technique: Start with low-cost request and later reveal the hidden costs (e.g., used car salesmen)
 - Bait-and-Switch Technique: Draw people in with an attractive offer that is not available and then switch to a less attractive offer that is available (e.g., cheap hotel rooms)
 - Labeling Technique: One assigns a label and then requests a favor that is consistent with the label (e.g., "You look like a kind man. Could you help me with my flat tire?")
 - Legitimization-of-Paltry-Favors Technique: A requester allows for a small amount of aid to be given (e.g., "Please donate to NPR. Even \$1 would be helpful!")

- ### Persuasion Techniques Based on Reciprocation
- Door-in-the-face Technique
 - Start with an inflated request and then retreat to a smaller one that appears to be a concession
 - Does not work if the first request is viewed as unreasonable
 - Does not work if requests are made by different people
 - That's-Not-All Technique
 - Begin with inflated request but immediately adds to the deal by offering a bonus or discount

Persuasion Techniques Based on Scarcity



- “What is rare is a greater good than what is plentiful”
– Aristotle
- Scarcity: Opportunities seem more valuable to us when they are less available
 - Heuristic used in making decisions
 - Scarcity activates psychological reactance
 - If I can't have Item X, then I will really want Item X!!
- Putting the scarcity principle to work:
 - Limited numbers paradigm: only have a few items left
 - Time limit paradigm: offer is only available for a limited time

Persuasion Techniques Based on Disrupting Attention

- Pique Technique: Captures people's attention by making a novel request
 - “Sir, can you give me 28 cents?”
 - 28 cents instead of a quarter
- Disrupt-Then-Reframe Technique: Introduce an unexpected element that disrupts critical thinking and then reframe the message in a positive light
 - “This box of cards costs 300 pennies...it is a bargain!”
 - 300 pennies instead of \$3

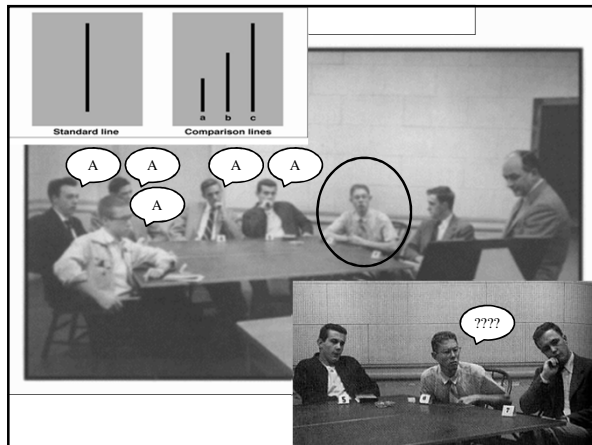
Behavior in Groups: The Influence of Other People

- Individual productivity usually decreases in larger groups
 - Reduced efficiency and loss of coordination
 - **Social loafing** is a reduction in effort by individuals when they work in groups as compared to when they work by themselves
 - ...but the presence of others can sometimes lead to enhanced performance through **social facilitation**
- Decision making in groups
 - **Group polarization** occurs when group discussion strengthens a group's dominant point of view and produces a shift toward a more extreme decision in that direction
 - **Groupthink** occurs when members of a cohesive group emphasize agreement at the expense of critical thinking in arriving at a decision

Table 12.1
Characteristics of Groupthink

CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION
Invulnerability	Members feel they cannot fail.
Rationalization	Members explain away warning signs and help each other rationalize their decision.
Lack of introspection	Members do not examine the ethical implications of their decision because they believe that they cannot make immoral choices.
Stereotyping	Members stereotype their enemies as weak, stupid, or unreasonable.
Pressure	Members pressure each other not to question the prevailing opinion.
Lack of disagreement	Members do not express opinions that differ from the group consensus.
Self-deception	Members share the illusion that they all agree with the decision.
Insularity	Members prevent the group from hearing disruptive but potentially useful information from people who are outside the group.

Source: Janis (1972, 1982).



Asch's Conformity Studies

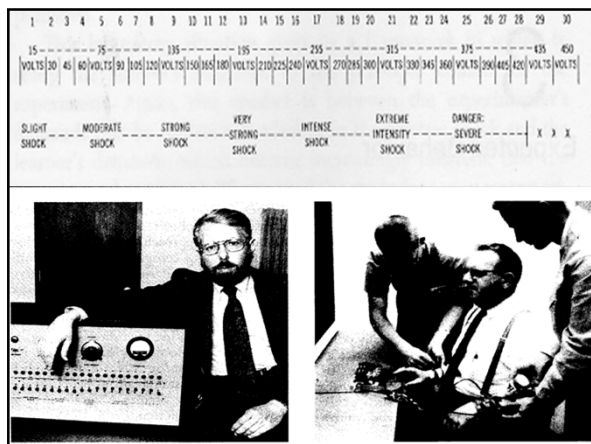
- When answering alone, 99% were correct
- What if others gave the wrong answer...would people agree with the group or give the obvious correct answer?
- 6 confederates and 1 participant
 - Participant answered 6th of the 7 'participants'
 - Confederates all gave the same wrong answer
- 37% of the responses were conforming
 - About 75% of participants conformed at least once
- There was no 'extra' incentive to conform
- Unlike real life, the stimulus was unambiguous

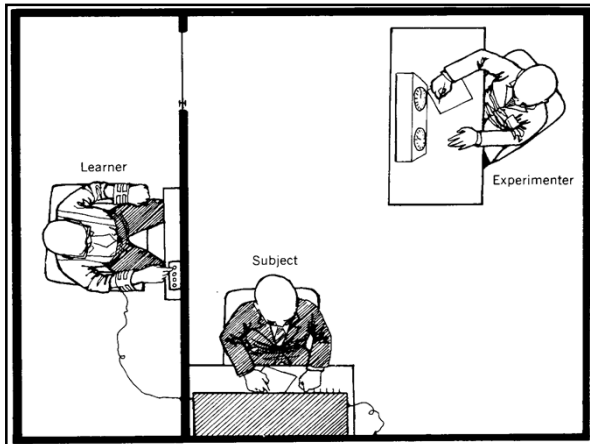
Factors Related to Conformity

- Group size: Conformity increases as the size increases up to about 5 people
 - Milgram's study which had people looking up at the sky
- Unanimity: When participants had an 'ally,' conformity decreased considerably
 - Dropped to about 9% in Asch's studies
- Cohesion: The more closely a group is bound together, the more conforming its members tend to be
 - Eating disorders tend to "spread" within sororities
- Status: Higher-status people have more impact
- Public response: We conform more when we respond in front of others rather than answering privately

Milgram's Obedience Experiments

- Will people follow orders even if the order violates their ethical standards?
- Ostensibly a study about punishment and learning
- Teacher and learner
 - Teacher is the participant
 - Learner is a confederate
- Teacher gives learner increasingly intense shocks if learner answers incorrectly
 - From 15 volts (slight shock) to 450 volts (XXX)
- When will people stop giving shocks?
 - College students said they would stop by 135v
 - Professionals estimated that less than 1 in 1000 would go to 450v





Learner's Schedule of Protests in Milgram's 'Heart Disturbance' Experiments

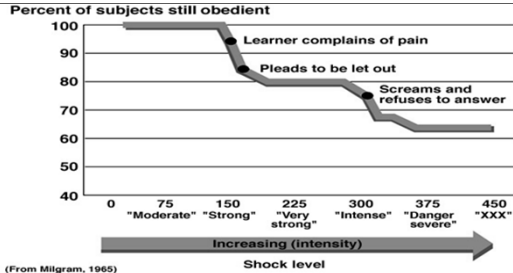
<p>75v: Ugh!</p> <p>90v: Ugh!</p> <p>105v: Ugh! (louder)</p> <p>120v: Ugh! Hey, this really hurts.</p> <p>135v: Ugh!</p> <p>150v: Ugh! Experimenter! That's all. Get me out of here. I told you I had heart trouble. My heart's starting to bother me now. Get me out of here, please. My heart's starting to bother me. I refuse to go on. Let me out.</p> <p>165v: Ugh! Let me out! (Shouting)</p> <p>180v: Ugh! I can't stand the pain. Let me out of here! (Shouting)</p> <p>195v: Ugh! Let me out of here. Let me out of here. My heart's bothering me. Let me out of here! You have no right to keep me here! Let me out! Let me out of here! My heart's bothering me. Let me out! Let me out!</p>	<p>210v: Ugh! Experimenter! Get me out of here. I've had enough. I won't be in the experiment any more.</p> <p>225v: Ugh!</p> <p>240v: Ugh!</p> <p>255v: Ugh! Get me out of here.</p> <p>270v: (Agonized scream) Let me out of here. Let me out of here. Let me out of here. Let me out. Do you hear? Let me out of here.</p> <p>285v: (Agonized scream)</p> <p>300v: (Agonized scream) I absolutely refuse to answer any more. Get me out of here. You can't hold me here. Get me out. Get me out of here.</p> <p>315v: (Intensely agonized scream) I told you I refuse to answer. I'm no longer part of this experiment.</p> <p>330v: (Intense and prolonged agonized scream) Let me out of here. Let me out of here. My heart's bothering me. Let me out. I tell you. (Hysterically) Let me out of here. Let me out of here. You have no right to hold me here. Let me out! Let me out! Let me out!...</p>
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Please continue...

- If the teacher asks to stop or inquires what to do, the experimenter calmly tells him to go on:
 - "Please continue"
 - "The experiment requires that you continue"
 - "It is absolutely essential that you continue"
 - "You have no other choice; you must go on"
- These simple statements were enough to make most participants obedient

Results

65% of participants went all the way to 450 volts



Milgram's Obedience Experiments



Social Psychology of Cults

- James Warren Jones (Jonestown)
 - Started the People's Temple in Indiana
 - Moved to California and eventually Guyana
 - He claimed to have the power to heal, talk to spirits, and see the future
 - Killed a congressman, reporters, and some members of his congregation who were trying to leave
 - He convinced more than 900 people (including nearly 300 children) to commit "revolutionary suicide" by drinking purple Kool-Aid laced with cyanide
 - How could he have exerted such influence over these people?



Social Psychology of Cults



- Video
- Heaven's Gate was a cult based on UFOs that was located in San Diego
- Founded by Marshall Applewhite in the 1970s after he had a heart attack and was convinced that he had been selected by god to spread his message
- 39 members of the group committed mass suicide in March of 1997 in order for their souls to be taken aboard a UFO following the Hale-Bopp comet
- The suicide was accomplished by ingesting phenobarbital and vodka followed by covering their heads with plastic bags.
 - Bodies were found lying neatly in their own bunk beds, faces and torsos covered by a square, purple cloth. Each member carried a five dollar bill and three quarters in their pockets. All 39 were dressed in identical black shirts and sweat pants, brand new black-and-white athletic shoes, and armband patches reading "Heaven's Gate Away Team" (one of many Star Trek references)
 - Six men had been castrated.
 - Three waves of suicides with remaining members cleaning up after the death of each prior group. Fifteen members died on March 24, 15 more on March 25, and nine on March 26.
 - Only survivor: Rio Di Angelo was told to leave the group so he could ensure future dissemination of Heaven's Gate videos and literature

Social Psychology of Cults

- Order of the Solar Temple
- A cult based on the continuing existence of the Knights Templar
- Goals
 - Preparing for the second coming of Jesus as a solar god-king
 - Furthering a unification of all Christian churches and Islam
- October 1994: They killed a 3-month-old infant they believed was the Anti-Christ (repeatedly stabbed with a wooden stake)...then committed mass suicide/murder with 15 suicides (poison) and 38 murdered...48 more died soon after in another mass murder-suicide
- Another mass suicide was stopped in the mid-1990s
- March 23, 1997: 5 members killed themselves
- The murder-suicides were committed on dates related to the equinoxes and solstices
