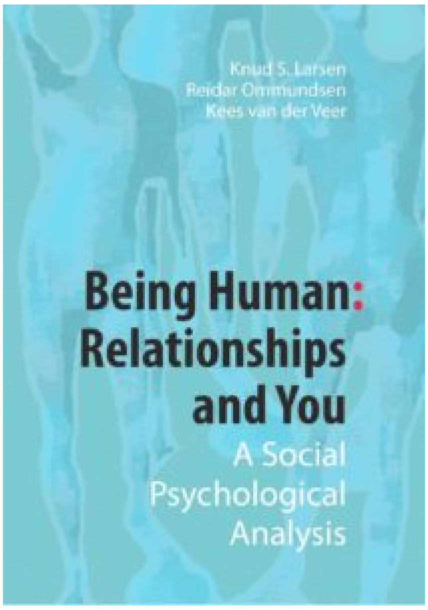
Being Human. Chapter 2. Cultural And Social Dimensions Of The Self



A group of international students is sitting around the dinner table discussing the television menu for the evening. A Norwegian woman student says, "let's watch the soap, exciting things are happening to the relationships in the show". A student from Asia disagrees since soaps "show disrespect for social values and relationships". Someone from the States suggests watching a boxing match since that "demonstrates personal courage and achievement of the up and coming athletes". The Asian student replies that rather than boxing, watching a team sport like soccer is more interesting. Another supporter of the soap option however, suggests that soap dramas are much more exciting as they deal with relationships, and "that is all there really is to life".

Cultural and gender stereotypes that are parodied above are addressed in this chapter. Our social selves are partially defined by gender and cultural values, and much else. How do we come to be who we are? How is the self formed and what function does it play in the psychological economy of the individual? Are we motivated to behave in certain ways depending on our social selves? What is the route to well-being; does it help to have illusions about life? Why do we spend so much time and effort trying to impress others, and is impression management adaptable? These and many other issues are discussed in this chapter.

Who we are and where we come from has engaged the attention of philosophers and psychologists for generations. In more recent times the methods of experimental social psychology have been employed in the quest to understand the self and its dominant attributes. The self is defined as a set of beliefs we hold about our attributes and ourselves. We think of ourselves in terms of important personal characteristics like our career choice, our level of competence, and our plans for the future. The latter defines our possible selves. The continuity we feel in life is due to the self-concept. Similarity in personality with siblings, and especially identical twins, is based on common biological heritability that also contributes to self-hood.

Everything important about our lives, our family relationships, our development, the cultural and social context of our lives, all contribute to the topic of this chapter. Self-knowledge provides direction and order in our lives. Since we all fall short in goal attainment, there is a balance between flaws and self-efficacy. These discrepancies directly impact how we feel about ourselves, our self-esteem. Since feelings of self-esteem are also bound up with how others think about us, we perform in the great theater that is life, playing out roles of self-presentation. We want to convince others of our positive qualities and therefore have strong motives to manage the impression we make. We know how to react appropriately to varying situational demands because culture creates the parameters of appropriate conduct.

1. The beginnings of the social self

Self-awareness begins early in life. By about nine months of age the average child begins to differentiate the self from others (Harter, 1983). At the age of 18 months the typical child will have a developed sense of self-awareness such as reacting more to pictures of themselves than to those of unrelated people. Gradually as our self-knowledge grows, the primitive sense of self takes on other attributes. Our environment may nurture positive self-attributes leading to feelings of competence or self-efficacy. Others not so fortunate live in restrictive environments that place early limits on what is considered possible, and therefore affect plans for career and development. We are not the only species to demonstrate self-awareness (Gallup, 1977; 1997). The experimenter initially placed a mirror in the cage of chimpanzees until it became a familiar object. Afterwards the experimenter placed an odorless red dye on the animals' ear or brow. The animals recognized that something had changed and responded with immediately touching the area dyed. Studies with dolphins and other animals demonstrate a similar pattern of self-recognition (Mitchell, 2003).

1.1 Self-knowledge

Using similar techniques with toddlers, researchers found that self-recognition is present at around age two (Lewis, 1997; Povinelli, Landau, & Perrilloux, 1996). Over time the child begins to incorporate psychological attributes including more complex feelings and thoughts. Our social self is inseparable from how we are evaluated by others (Hart & Damon, 1986). As we develop more complex beliefs and feelings about the self, we also begin to project ourselves to some degree into the future. From these initial experiences with the family, educational system, and the broader culture the social self gradually emerges. The self-concept is the knowledge we have of ourselves, that we exist separately from others, and have our own unique properties. As part of our self-knowledge we develop a belief system that governs behavior. Do we live in a world of chaos or order? Do we believe we can accomplish important goals? Can other people be trusted? Is it a dog-eats-dog world, or are there valid altruistic behaviors. This complex web of beliefs in turn contributes to whether we approach or avoid others, our feelings of self-esteem, and whether we have a concept of what we could become in the future, a possible self. In this process of maturation children gradually place less emphasis on concrete physical descriptions of the self, and place more emphasis on complex psychological states including thoughts, feelings, and the evaluations of others (Harter, 2003; Hart & Damon, 1986).

1.2 Self-esteem

The second aspect of the self-concept consists of our self-evaluations or self-esteem. Self-esteem is evaluative based on very basic judgments of personal morality, and whether in our own eyes we are satisfied or dissatisfied with our performance. Global self-esteem can be measured by surveys and is related to our need for approval (e.g. Larsen, 1969). The lower our self-esteem the more we have a need for affirmation and approval by others and society. High self- esteem on the other hand is associated with setting appropriate goals, using feedback from others to progress, and enjoying positive experiences to the fullest extent possible (Wood, Heimpel, Michel, 2003). When experiencing rejection or frustration, those with high self-esteem will find a silver lining. High self-esteem is adaptable and is associated with goal persistence and the ability when frustrated to envision alternative goals (Sommer & Baumeister, 2002). High self-esteem people will look at the past through rose-colored glasses, and this selective positive memory bias may in turn support higher self-esteem (Christensen, Wood, & Barrett, 2003).

On the other hand those people with low self-esteem not only think poorly of themselves, but the negative self-conceptions have other unfortunate consequences. Low self-esteem persons are more pessimistic about the future, tend to obsess about their negative moods, are more concerned about the opinions of others, and have higher needs for approval (Heimpel, Wood, Marshall, & Brown, 2002). Low self-esteem is also reflected in negative estimations of competence or self-efficacy, and in self-loathing. On the other hand, those with positive feelings toward the self, like themselves and have feelings of competence (Tafarodi, Marshall, & Milne, 2003). As we shall see throughout this chapter and what follows, the cultural context matters. Members of Asian cultures, for example, are less self-enhancing in explicit ways, but enhance more in implicit ways (Koole, Dijksterhuis, & Van Knippenberg, 2001).

2. Building blocks of the emerging self

Children are not truly a tabula rasa when entering the world. Scientists have for some time found traits that seem to be universal in all cultures. Traits typically describe cross-situational consistency; i.e., the consistent way people act, think or feel despite changing circumstances. Researchers point to five traits as basic to our self-understanding. These characteristics include relative openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism, also known as the Big Five (Costa & McCrae, 1995; John & Srivastava, 1999).

People use these basic traits in describing themselves, and in judging other people. The descriptions of others tend to be accurate in the sense that they match self-descriptions (Funder, 1995; John & Robins, 1993; Watson, 1989). Many psychologists believe that the Big Five traits are the basic building blocks of personality. Is there a biological basis for these fundamental traits? The evidence is pointing in that direction since people from a variety of countries and cultures use these same traits in describing the self and other people (Buss, 1999).

2.1 The heritability of personality traits

Evidence has been produced that supports at least the partial heritability of personality traits (Plomin & Caspi, 1998). Studies of identical and fraternal twins show conclusively that trait similarity is based on shared genes. For example, studies of the personalities of identical twins show a greater similarity in traits compared to fraternal twins. Those trait similarities are reliable even when identical twins are reared apart, strongly suggesting a genetic component to some aspects of personality (Loehlin, 1992).

Often traits found early in development are consistent over the lifespan. Longitudinal studies have shown that children identified as shy at nine months develop elevated levels of stress hormone cortisol associated with fear (Kagan, 1989). Neuroticism is associated with a heightened activation of the autonomic nervous system involved in subjective stress (Zuckerman, 1996). On the positive side extraversion is related to higher levels of the neurotransmitter dopamine that is in turn predictive of approach related behaviors (DePue, 1995). Clearly the self cannot be understood apart from our biological inheritance. People react consistently to the varying manifestations of these traits. These reactions in turn play a significant role in how we develop as persons and how we develop more complex self-identities (Malatesta, 1990).

2.2 Genetics and social behavior

The relationship of genetics to complex social behavior is an exiting new frontier. Social behavior is complex and both genes and the social environment play a role. Some genes require specific environments to have an effect on behavior so interactions matter. In a study on violence (Caspi, McClay, Moffitt, Mill, Martin, & Craig, 2002) the researchers tested for the presence of the Monoamine oxidase A gene responsible for metabolizing neurotransmitters in the brain, and for promoting smooth communication between the neurons. The absence of the gene by itself had little effect. However, when combined with abuse and maltreatment the men in the study were three times as likely to have been convicted of violent crimes by age 26. Low levels or absence of the MAOA gene combined with maltreatment developed anti-social behavior in 85 percent of the boys. As we begin to see the complex interaction between our biological inheritance and complexities of the social context the interdependence of both is clear. Many of these traits were adaptive in response to evolutionary requirements. As society has also evolved many of these traits are no longer functional. Being a little fearful and neurotic might have been very functional in the days of saber tooth tigers, but create interpersonal problems for those who have inherited an excess of these traits today.

3. The nature of the self-concept: the hard and easy problem

William James (1890) is today recognized as a founder of American Psychology. In his early writings he described the essential duality of the self-concept. The first aspect of the self-concept is composed of all the thoughts and beliefs we hold about our self, also called the “known self” or “me”. The second component of the self is the “knower”. The “knower” refers to the observatory function of the self, or now more commonly called self-awareness. We come to know who we are by becoming aware and thinking about ourselves.

Today the aspect of the self defined as the self-concept or “me “is gradually being understood through experimentation. The self-concept and its relationship to brain functions is what might be called the "easy" problem. The hard problem that remains is somewhat of a mystery, is what is called the "knower". Those with religious inclinations would refer to the "knower" as the immaterial soul. The scientist does not find that construct convincing as the soul construct explains everything and in reality nothing. The soul definition is a form of nominalism that simply puts a label or name to a process, and we do not advance much in our understanding by just placing another label on the "knower".

3.1 The easy and the hard problem in self-definition: Me versus the knower

Freud wrote a great deal about conscious and unconscious processes. Much of our thinking is in fact accessible to our awareness. We make plans for the future, decide on what to have for dinner, save up for children's college. These and much more are conscious in the sense that they are accessible thoughts that we can think about and evaluate. Other processes like the functions of the autonomic nervous system are largely unconscious. We know they are present in the body, but they are generally not available to the reasoning or planning functions of the brain.

The hard problem is trying to understand why it feels like we have a conscious process to begin with, that we are aware of a first person very subjective experience, the executive "I" or the decision maker (Pinker, 2007). The scientist finds it difficult to explain how this subjective feeling of the self arises from neural computations in the brain. Do you believe that all our joys and pain can be reduced to neurological activity in the brain? The hard problem is: does consciousness exist in an ethereal soul or is consciousness purely a brain function defined as the activity of the brain.

Today some cognitive neuroscientists claim that by using MRI we can practically read people's thoughts from blood flow in the brain**.** Through electrical stimulation of certain areas of the brain we can cause hallucination such as hearing music played long ago, or experiencing childhood memories. Anti-depressants like Prozac can profoundly affect feelings and thoughts. Also, whenever the brain function ceases so far as we can see our consciousness comes to an end. No reliable reports of contacts with the dead have been produced. Even near death experiences where the soul purportedly departs the body only to return are probably caused by oxygen starvation of the eyes and brain. Some Swiss neuroscientists (Pinker, 2007) have managed to turn out-of-body experiences off and on by stimulating the part of the brain overlapping vision and bodily sensations. The fact that all observable psychological activity has a physiological concomitant lends little support for a soul construct.

Many visions or “miracles can be attributed to how the brain developed to meet survival needs. It appears, for example, that we posses a template for the recognition of faces in a variety of objects. Some years ago a woman made herself a cheese sandwich and experienced a vision, as she perceived the Virgin Mary in the brown skillet marks. She eventually sold the sandwich on eBay for $28000.00 probably to someone who wanted a vicarious vision. In another case people saw a three dimensional face on the surface of Mars after an orbiter captured images from the Cydonia region of Mars. That image ignited enthusiasm, and encouraged conspiracy theories about denial of life on our sister planet. All of us have had the experience of gazing into the sky and finding faces in the moving clouds. These experiences appear to be functions of three regions of the temporal lobe of the brain that is involved in the recognition of faces. The tendency to see faces is a result of neural architecture with obvious evolutionary advantages (Svoboda, 2007) In our distant past some faces or images should be avoided like that of the saber tooth tiger; others should be approached like that of family or beneficent higher powers.

The materialist explanation is advanced by the argument that the “knower” or “executive I” is an illusion. From this perspective consciousness consists of numerous or even an overwhelming amount of external events that compete for attention. As an evolutionary adaptation the brain developed decision-making functions to discriminate between important and non-essential input. Subsequently the brain rationalizes the outcome after it has occurred giving us the impression that someone was in charge. Information overload requires the decision making function of the self, and those who developed better neural webs were the ones who survived. Pinker believes that the “knower” is nothing more than “executive summaries of the events and states that are most relevant to updating an understanding of the world and figuring out what to do next” (p.65).

Damasio (2007) argues that self-awareness is a function of evolutionary biology and psychology. Initially gene networks organized themselves to evolve complex organisms with brains. Further evolution enriched the complexity of brains by developing sensory and motor maps to represent the environmental context. Eventually with more evolutionary complexity different parts of the brain developed the ability to communicate, and generate sophisticated maps of the organism interacting with the environment. From this natural knowledge the basic self emerges, and the brain's sensory-motor maps change from non conscious mental patterns to conscious mental images. Scientists are gradually developing the ability to find neural correlates of conscious activity of the self.

However, what of the inner experience we called the hard problem? Some would simply call it information processing thereby making it an "easy" problem. Others would say that since there is no test that could distinguish between a well-designed robot, and a human, we should just let the problem go away as irrelevant (Dennett, 2007). Still others will say that our failure to understand the hard problem is a function of the limitation of our brain. After all we have many other limitations like failing to grasp the existence of spheres greater than three. Brain limitations include the difficulty of understanding how stimuli from the outside produce subjective feelings on the inside.

Many fear the loss of a moral perspective if we come to believe in a material self. After all if we do not have an immortal soul why worry about salvation in an unseen world to come? Others would argue that believing in the materialist self would increase empathy as we are all in the same existential boat. To be aware of how temporary life and consciousness is should give poignant meaning to all life and sympathy for all who struggle with the same reality. Keep in mind that belief in the immortal soul did not prevent believers from engaging in gross defiance of morality by committing genocide and cruelty. The crusades conquered land with great cruelty still remembered by Muslim zealots today. In the dark ages half a million women were burned at the state by the inquisition in an attempt to save their immortal souls. The destruction of 9/11 and what followed was largely motivated by religious morality on both sides including the belief in the immortal soul. Religious ideology often provides heavenly rewards for killing and destruction. Perhaps we would all be better off believing in a fragile and temporary existence.

3.2 The hard problem remains

At the end of the day the hard problem remains unsolved. It seems particularly difficult to understand deep feelings as solely a consequence of brain activity. Some of us have experienced awe in the presence of the truly noble and good. How can one attribute these feelings as an interpretive consequence of brain activity? The sense of unspeakable joy that comes in the wake of love, the truly altruistic behavior of others resonates in our minds in ways not easily understood by the material self. The cynic can of course reduce altruism to reward expectations, but the "knower" knows the difference. The feelings of grandeur in the presence of nature, the emotions experienced from certain types of music are examples of the presence of a "knower". The drumbeats of the Nazi's reflect the robotic self that resonates with martial spirit and aggression and self-aggrandizement. However, music may also cause meditation and bring to us harmony and peace. Understanding meditative feelings, altruism, and the noble as brain functions remains a hard problem.

Perhaps viewing consciousness from the perspective of brain functioning is good science, but philosophically unsound? Science has made great progress in breaking objects into atomic and subatomic particles. Is there a bias in that perspective? Are there other routes to the factual and truth? At least we know that the whole is always more than the sum of its parts. Human attributes create questions as many people feel compassion towards others. Where does that come from? If we can't find the answer in neurons firing, then is consciousness a primary principle? Are we really illusions caused by 100 billion simmering neurons? What is the locus for experiencing ideas and intentions temporally? Do we perceive time because it is separate from us? Some parts of the self remain for life, we can recognize our basic components, but we are also aware of time and change. If we were caught up in time could we perceive it? These and many other issues remain for the most intriguing and fundamental issue of human existence.

There is a mysterious aspect to life that even the greatest minds cannot understand. Einstein too was in a state of awe by what he saw as a causal and ordered nature. Perhaps he was affected by the certainty of the subjective "I" when he wrote his credo " The most beautiful emotion we can experience is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead, a snuffed-out candle. To sense that behind anything that can be experienced there is something that our minds can not grasps, whose beauty and sublimity reaches us only indirectly: this is religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I am a devoutly religious man" (Isaacson, 2007). Did Einstein address the common human limitation of our brains? Did he attribute religiousness to our inability to understand what is after all natural stimuli? Or did Einstein acknowledge with certainty that the hard problem remains, and will not easily yield a solution.

4. The development of the Social Self

How do we come to know who we are? The sources of the self-knowledge are primarily other people, although we can also learn by observing our own behavior, and by thinking about ourselves. Socialization is the context in which we form our self-attributes. It is through family and other socialization agents that we learn about our level of competence, success in achieving important goals, and whether we are evaluated positively. From that we derive self-esteem. Through socialization we acquire our standards for behavior, and we incorporate the values of our family and culture. The way we are consistently treated in early socialization forms the core of what we come to believe about ourselves that guides us throughout life.

Cooley (1902) developed a concept called the “looking glass self”. From his perspective we learn about ourselves through the reactions of other people. This is called reflected appraisals. Those who experience constant praise come to believe they are valuable; those who experience maltreatment grow up thinking their lives are worthless. So feedback from others is a basic key to understanding the social self. The importance can be seen in a study on parental perceptions and children’s self-perceptions (Felson & Reed, 1986). In general there is close similarity between parent’s beliefs about children’s abilities, and the children’s self-concept.

Later of course, we encounter peers and these have profound importance during adolescence (Leary, Cottrell, & Phillips, 2001). Most of us know intuitively our social standing from the preferences of our peers. The order in which children are chosen for athletic teams tells a lot about the person’s perceived contribution to a team, and value to his peers. Whether a girl gets asked out for dates also tells her a great deal about how peers perceive her in terms of physical attractiveness and her personality. Teachers give feedback on school performance that is either encouraging or discouraging in competitive educational environments. Competitive educational experiences using the normal curve for grading feedback do not foster growth in all children. Some children will always occupy low or failing comparative standing. These early experiences contribute to whether the individual’s possible self is optimistic or pessimistic. If we are encouraged in childhood and adolescence we form plans about what we can become, what contribution we can make to society, and how we can find self-fulfillment. We have more to say about self and motivation in section 9.

4.1 Forming the possible self through family socialization

A family has influence not only through parental guidance, but also through relationships formed with siblings. In societies with scarce resources, sibling conflict is frequent and violent. Human history bears witness to violent outcomes from Cain and Abel to current news stories. Even very young children engage in frequent conflict (Dunn & Munn, 1985). Birth order matters because children learn to adjust to certain niches in the family that is functional and rewarding. Older siblings tend to be more dominant and assertive as well as more achievement oriented and conscientious (Sulloway, 1996; 2001). The larger size of older siblings would naturally make them more dominant, and at the same time give them a greater share of responsibility to look after the younger sibling.

On the other hand, younger siblings tend to be more open to new ideas, and experiment with novel thoughts. In Suloway's study of thousands of scientists, younger siblings were more open to novelty and thinking outside the box. On the negative side, they were also more likely to endorse pseudoscientific ideas like phrenology. Later born scientists possessed the consistency to make many scientific discoveries, whereas younger siblings were risk takers traveling far away in search of novel ideas. Darwin, for example, was the fifth sibling in his family, and developed a theory that changed physical and social science forever. He risked a great deal in his search for scientific data, traveling to unknown parts of the world to collect information in support of evolution, a theory that challenged the very fabric of our religiously founded beliefs about the origin of man.

4.2 The social self and group membership

Our social identity becomes part of our self-concept as we learn the values associated with the group membership, and its emotional significance in our lives (Tajfel, 1981). Much work has been completed in recent decades that show that mere membership even in meaningless groups attaches profound significance to behavior and self-conception (e.g. Doise, Dann, Gouge, Larsen, & Ostell, 1972). Since membership in nonsensical groups produces significant influence on behavior, how much more powerful is the influence of group identity if based on memberships in real social groups that produce attitudinal reactions by society? Members of minority groups often have confusing demands made by membership in both the minority and in coping with the larger society (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997). Some minorities develop bicultural competence and identity; others are assimilated into the dominant culture, and yet others are marginalized from both societies (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000; Phinney, 1991).

Minority status has important consequences for the self-concept and esteem. As socialization takes place, the individual often engages in self-stereotyping identifying with the attributes thought positive in the group (Biernat, Vescio, & Green, 1996). Bicultural identification seems to produce the best results for self-esteem (Phinney, 1991). High self-esteem in minorities is a function of strong ethnic identity combined with positive attitudes toward the mainstream culture. It stands to reason that those with bicultural identities and competence will experience life as more rewarding, and will function more successfully in society.

*4.3 Culture as a source of the self-concep*t

In chapter 1 we introduced the concept of independent and interdependent cultures. It is now time to apply the concept to the formation of the social self. We shall see that this cultural difference has applications throughout this chapter and in the chapters that follow. Culture has profound effects in socializing people. It produces predictable differences in self-concepts between members of different cultures. Western societies found in North America and Europe have inculcated social values significant to adaptation and survival in the capitalist model. The term “rugged individualism” points to a person who is first and foremost independent, and able to cope with the hazards of life in early United States. In this cultural environment the values of individual rights and freedoms were promoted at least formally. Each man was a king in his own house, and society was preoccupied with individual self-actualization.

In Asian societies, on the other hand, we have ancient cultures that had to adapt to high levels of physical density. Physical density is not experienced as crowding the way it would be experienced in the west, because of the highly developed structures of courtesy that meet the need for personal space and privacy. These cultural differences have been summarized in the terms “independent “ and “interdependent” societies introduced in chapter 1. Hall (1976) thought of independent societies, as “low-context cultures” where social roles while not unimportant mattered less. Therefore a person from independent cultures would more or less act the same regardless of the changing context of behavior or the situation. In interdependent cultures on the other hand, the social context matters a great deal, and the individual’s behavior will change dependent on the specific role played by the participant. In interdependent cultures the self would differ depending on role expectation. The person would behave differentially depending on whether the behavior involves a relationship with parents, peers, or colleagues. As we shall see, in western societies the bias toward independence leads to attribution errors where we underestimate the influence of the situation, and attribute behavior primarily to individual traits.

In recent years social psychologists have carried out many cross-cultural studies on how motivations, emotions, and behaviors are shaped by cultural conceptions of the self. (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Rhee, Uleman, & Roman, 1995; Triandis, 1995). From this accumulated research the independent cultures are identified primarily in the West. In these societies the self is seen as autonomous, as distinct and separate from other members of society. The focus of the independent self is on what makes the self distinctive or different from others. Consequently explanations for behavior are sought within the individual's personality. Not only is independence a fundamental value, but also westerners believe that the main object of socialization is to create independent children (Kitayama, 1992). The self is therefore described as composed of individual attributes (Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991). Achievements are seen as primarily the result of individual and distinctive efforts, where family or society played at best peripheral roles.

In the interdependent cultures of Asia and countries in the developing world the self is perceived as part of the larger social context. The self is not construed apart from other people, but rather as connected to family and larger social organizations. The willingness of people to go on suicide missions like the kamikaze pilots of Japan is related to the interdependent self-construal where country and emperor are part of the self. Western combatants may also fight with great courage, however that is best elicited when there is some possibility if not probability of survival. In interdependent societies the self is completely embedded in the roles and duties of social relationships. Culture therefore determines to a large extent self-knowledge and self-esteem, as well as self-presentations and impression management. The self is connected to the attributes of others, is not seen as distinctive, but associated with common traits (Bochner, 1994). These cultural differences are thought to profoundly affect how individuals think about themselves, how they relate to others in society, and what motivates their behavior (Markus & Kitayama, 1994).

Studies have shown that Americans achieve primarily for personal reasons, whereas those from interdependent societies strive to achieve group goals (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). It is the personal nature of tasks and objectives that motivate behavior in the West, whereas Asian students are motivated more by group goals. Consequently students in the West are more likely to select careers or tasks in which they have experienced previous competence or which had been positive and rewarding in the past. The career choices of Asians on the other hand are not based on such personal expectations or prior performance (Oishi & Diener, 2003).

As we can imagine, these cultural differences in self-construal also affect how we organize information in memory (Woike, Gershkovich, Piorkowski, & Polo, 1999). People in independent cultures disregard the social context in memory formation, or think of events in personal terms. Elections in the United States are typically about the personal attributes of candidates where the social context matters little. Typically this process manipulates the indifferent electorate to disregard political programs in the search for the "right" person.

There are some researchers who feel these cultural differences in self-construal make intercultural communication very difficult (Kitayama & Markus, 1994). Yet, at the end of the day we must remember that these cultural differences are abstractions. There are always more differences to be found within than between social groups. In independent cultures there are many with interdependent self-construal, particularly among women (Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000; Cross & Vick, 2001). In interdependent societies there are those who's self-construal are independent. Further, migration is changing the world. For example within United States and Europe there are many immigrants who think of themselves with interdependent self-construal. Many migrants work hard in western societies just so they can send most of their earnings back to the home country. Globalization is also producing more converging values for example an emphasis on human rights in nearly all societies, and as that takes its course in the future we must reevaluate the cultural differences discussed above.

4.4 Gender and the social self

Gender is the most obvious parameter in our self-concept. In every society males and females are treated differentially with life-long consequences. Women are more interdependent as they tend to view themselves connected to relationships as mother, daughter or wife. Their behavior therefore tends to be more influenced by the thoughts and feelings of others because relationships are construed as central to self and life (Baumeister & Sommer, 1997; Cross & Madson 1997;Cross, Bacon, Morris, 2000; Gabriel & Gardner, 1999). Women display relational interdependence in close relationships especially within the family. On the other hand men display relational interdependence within larger collectives such as political parties, athletic teams, or in feelings of national identity. (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Consistent socialization processes throughout the world lead females to focus more on intimacy and to have a greater willingness to discuss emotional topics than men (Davidson & Duberman, 1982). These gender differences in self-construal appear consistent across cultures (Kashima, Siegal, Tanaka, & Kashima, 1992), and reflect the different functions of the sexes in the historical and evolutionary struggle for survival.

When women define themselves they use references to other people and relationships. For example when asked to show photographs they are more likely to include intimate others in the photos (Clancy & Dollinger, 1993). Women spend more time thinking about their partners (Ickes, Robertson, Tooke, & Teng, 1986), are better judges of other peoples personality, and more empathetic (Bernieri, Zuckerman, Koestner, & Rosenthal, 1994; Hall, 1984). In directing their attention toward others women also demonstrate greater alertness to situational clues and the reactions of other people, whereas men focus better on internal processes such as increase in heart rate (Roberts & Pennebaker, 1995).

How does socialization encourage gender differences in self-construal? All the agents of socialization are at work. The media portray women differently from men encouraging interdependent stereotypes. The educational system forms different expectations for appropriate goals and behaviors. Parents treat girls differently than boys from the very beginning. All these socialization agents work consistently together to establish reliable gender differences (Fivush, 1992). Throughout childhood girls and boys play in separate playgroups with girls playing more cooperatively, and boys engaging more in competitive games (Maccoby, 1990). In early human history these gender differences most likely evolved in response to evolutionary demands that rewarded survival to those who developed gender specific traits. As we are the most dependent of all species we are lucky for women’s innate desire to love and look after defenseless infants, and their very personal interests in the survival and well-being of their babies. In the following sections we will consider two theories explaining the development of the social self.

5. Social comparison theory: learning about the social self from others

Festinger (1954) proposed a theory for understanding self-knowledge. He asserted that people have a drive to accurately evaluate their beliefs and opinions. Since there are no explicit physical standards for psychological constructs we learn by comparing our thoughts with those who are similar to us. This original model has been worked over a great deal since first proposed (Goethals & Darley, 1987; Wood, 1989; Suls & Wheeler, 2000). Research has shown that people compare themselves across all imaginable dimensions including emotional responses, personality traits, and objective dimensions like equity in salary. Any relationship that makes the self salient would evoke the comparison process, our marriage as compared to other couples, our racial group compared to others for evaluating fair treatment, our fellow students for correct answers to test questions and grades, all comparisons contribute to relative satisfaction depending on comparison outcomes.

5.1 Comparing for self-enhancement or achievement

How do we get a sense of who we are without reference to the accomplishments or failures of other people in similar situations? Sometimes we seek self-enhancement by comparing downward, to someone not doing as well, and to those less fortunate. By comparing ourselves to those who earn lower grades, get less salary, or are hungry, many can at least temporarily feel better (Lockwood, 2002). Downward comparisons are especially strategic when one has experienced failure. By comparing downward and emphasizing one's positive qualities the damage to self-esteem is reduced (Mussweiler, Gabriel, & Bodenhausen, 2000).

At other times we are interested in improvement trying to reach a relevant and lofty goal. In that case successful others can serve as models for achievement comparisons. Most of us, perhaps all of us, would not achieve the mathematical insight of Albert Einstein. However, the aspiring scientist may be inspired by his example and seek a related self-relevant high achievement. At times upward comparisons are discouraging. When the goal is truly unreachable the comparison can result in envy and feelings of inadequacy (Patrick, Neighbors, & Knee, 2004). Anorexia and bulimia are large problems in today's society, many believe caused by the emphasis in thinness for women in the media. Nearly all models of women's clothing are super thin, and in fact look unhealthy. Perhaps worse they set an unattainable standard for most women. (See also discussion of social influence in chapter 7). Women who place high value on physical appearance suffer in self-esteem from such social comparison (Patrick et al, 2004). In summary some comparisons can be inspirational if the goals are possible and realistic in a person's future, but discouraging and demoralizing if they involve impossible goals or dreams.

Some people also compare from a desire to bond with others in the same straits (Staple & Kooman, 2001). How do we react to a crisis like hurricane Katrina and other natural disasters? Most of us will look to others to find the appropriate mixture of fear and courage in dealing with the situation. We also compare to similar people to enhance a sense of solidarity and common fate (Locke, 2003). When experiencing common fate people compare their responses to others to feel the strength of the community in facing crisis situations.

Social comparisons may occur in any situation of uncertainty when we are trying to find some appropriate response (Suls & Fletcher, 1983). You find yourself invited to a formal dinner party for the first time, a situation of some anxiety. Being uncertain how to dress appropriately, you ask the host for some helpful guidelines. At the dinner party chances are that you will let others more experienced carry the conversation until you get your bearings.

5.2 Social comparisons in summary

In general we seek comparisons from similar others, but if we want to enhance the self we compare downwards, if we are motivated by desire for improvement we find more successful models. (Goethals & Darley, 1977; Blanton, Buunk, Gibbons, & Kuyper, 1999). Sometimes we enhance the self-concept by comparing temporally with our former self (Ross & Wilson, 2002; Wilson & Ross, 2000). Most of us can find events from our earlier life that are more negative than our current situation. For example, perhaps we have fewer friends when we get older, but we believe that the quality of relationships has improved. To enhance we can compare our lives temporally and conclude that although the quantity of relationships has declined, life long friendships have a higher value than those formed in our youth.

6. Self-perception theory: self-knowledge by self-observation

Experience produces familiarity and most of us know how to react in situations we have visited previously. You listen to a political leader and from the storehouse of memories have ready feelings about the message and the messenger. Most people have established attitudes about a variety of topics like hip-hop music, jazz, or classical music and know how to react based on these schemas. At some point, however, you may experience the novel or unfamiliar and you are uncertain of how to respond. A stranger hands you a $100 bill, how should you react? Should you be happy or offended? If you react with joy, you may examine your reaction and conclude that you are happy. Self-perception theory (Bem, 1972) asserts that when our attitudes or feelings are ambiguous we infer their meaning by observing our own behavior as well as the situation. In other words, when we are unsure of our feelings we infer our feelings from our own behavior, how we actually respond,. You find yourself laughing in the presence of another person and conclude from that he/she makes you happy. You observe yourself kissing the person and from that and the other's behavior conclude that you are in love. When a person is in a situation not previously evaluated, and feelings are somewhat of a mystery, often our objective behavior becomes a guide to explain these feelings (Andersen & Ross, 1984; Chaiken & Baldwin, 1981).

Secondly, in deciding the meaning of the behavior it is attributed to either the person or the situation. Is the situation compelling your behavior or is the "executive I " in charge? If we are in control of the situation and feel in charge we may attribute the feelings to our dispositions. If, however, there are compelling pressures in the situation we are likely to attribute feelings to the situation rather than to the self. In short self-perception theory argues that we infer our feelings by observing our own behavior and infer either a personal cause or a situational reason for our behavior (Albarracin & Wyer, 2000; Dolinsky, 2000). We have more to say about self-perception and attitude formation in chapter 5.

Self-perception theory has important consequences for education and learning. For example does learning occur because of some extrinsic reward like grades? Such extrinsic reward is likely to produce short-term learning since the student feels justified to forget the learning once the reward is achieved. All the anxiety and cramming that occur in American universities is not for any intrinsic pleasure of learning, but just to pass a course or get good grades. Some children however, learn because of the intrinsic pleasure of mastering a subject. Students who are intrinsically motivated engage the subject matter because they find it interesting and enjoyable. (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Senko & Harackiewicz, 2002). Self-perception theory would argue that rewards could inhibit intrinsic motivation and destroy the pleasure of mastering the subject matter. When students come to believe that they are learning to obtain rewards it leads to an underestimation of the role played by the intrinsic motives (Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 1999; Lepper, Henderson, & Gingras, 1999). So although rewards can be motivational in the short run, they may produce external attribution that overlooks the intrinsic pleasure of learning.

It is obvious that any significant achievement occurs only where the self attributes intrinsic pleasure to the pursuit of knowledge. Students may pass courses, but little of the information learned from the reward of grade incentives will be stored in long-term memory. When the rewards cease so does the motivation to remember which is why the vast amount of information learned is lost within weeks. In one study on math games children's performance was compared between a reward program and the follow up during which no rewards were provided. The reward program did initially produce more interest and the children played more. However, those who initially had enjoyed the games lost interest during the follow-up and played less after the reward program ended (Greene, Sternberg, & Lepper, 1976). The researchers determined that it was the reward program that caused the children to like the games less. Related research (Tang & Hall, 1995) should cause us to think about what we do to the minds of children in an obsessive grade competitive educational system.

For parents rewards can be a two-edged sword. Praise for work well done can increase the child's self-esteem and sense of self-efficacy. It can also convey something about parental expectations for future work. But it is important that the child believes that their performance is not for external rewards but for reasons that are intrinsic and enjoyable. The child must have some control in the educational process where teachers and parents can nurture intrinsic motivation by doing enjoyable learning activities (Henderlong & Lepper, 2002). Otherwise the child comes to attribute reasons for performance to the reward system with resulting loss of motivation.

6.1 Schacter's two-factor theory of emotion

Schacter (1964) proposed a theory of emotion using self-perception ideas. Essentially the theory proposes that we learn to infer our emotions the same way as we learn about our self-concept by observing our own behavior. In Schacter's theory people observe their physiological internal experiences and try to make sense of these by looking for the most plausible explanation. The theory is called two-factor because we first experience the physiological reaction and then look for a reasonable cause to explain it. One now classic experiment was carried out to test this theory (Schacter & Singer, 1962). When the subject arrived for the experiment he was told he was participating in a study on the effect of a vitamin compound called Suproxin on vision. After the injection the subject was led to a waiting room to let the drug take effect. While there the subject was asked to fill out a survey containing some very insulting personal questions including one asking the subject about his mother's extramarital affairs. Another participant present, an experimental collaborator, also read the questions and angrily tossed the survey on the floor and left the room.

In fact the real purpose of the experiment was not to study vision, but to understand people's reaction to physiological arousal and the meaning attached. The participants were not given a vitamin compound but were injected with epinephrine, a hormone produced by the body that causes increased heart and breathing rates. How would you feel in a similar situation? You would have noticed the physiological change that occurred from the epinephrine. Your breathing rate would have increased and you would have felt aroused. Then the other participant reacts with anger at the survey. What is the most plausible explanation for the arousal that you feel? Since you have no information that you have been injected with epinephrine the most plausible explanation is found in the situational context of the survey and the other participant's anger. In fact that is what happened, and the participants injected with epinephrine were much more angry than the participants given a placebo.

In an extension of this work the researchers demonstrated that emotions are somewhat arbitrarily defined depending on what is the most plausible explanation found in the situational context (Schacter & Singer, 1962). For example, the emotion of anger could be aborted by offering a non emotional explanation for the arousal. The researchers accomplished this by telling the participants that they could expect to feel aroused after being injected. When the subjects then began to feel aroused they inferred that it was the injection that caused the change and they did not react with anger. In yet another condition Schacter and Singer demonstrated that they could create a very different emotion by providing an alternate explanation for the arousal. In this condition the experimental collaborator acted as if euphoric and happy. The subjects began to feel the same way and inferred that they too were feeling happy and euphoric. In short Schacter and Singer showed that emotions are part of the self-perception process where people seek the most plausible reason for internal bodily changes.

6.2 Misattribution for arousal

Since we have no explicit standard to determine what causes our emotions we can misinterpret the cause (Savisky, Medvec, Charlton, & Golovich, 1998; Zillman, 1978). We know now that the same physiological arousal occurs in a variety of circumstances and to varying stimuli. In some situations there may be more than one source to which we can attribute the arousal. To what do we attribute the increased heartbeat, shallow breathing, and the rise in body temperature? If next to another person could the physiological changes be the effect of that person? What about if you are next to the other person during a parachute jump? Is it the fascination with the other person or is it that you are approaching the Earth at great speed that causes the increased heartbeat? There is no standard that will tell for certain, and the possibilities of misattribution of the cause exist in all such circumstances.

In the classical Dutton & Aron study (1974) the researchers demonstrated the ease by which misattribution of arousal can occur. The experimenters had an attractive young woman approach males with a survey purportedly for a project for her psychology class. When they completed the survey she explained that she would be happy to explain more about the project at a later time, and she wrote her phone number on a corner, tore it off and gave it to the participant. This procedure was followed under two independent experimental conditions. In the first condition the men were approached after they had crossed a rickety 450 feet high footbridge over a river in Canada. Most of us would after the crossing experience all the symptoms of the epinephrine injection found in the study of Schacter and Singer. Most people have hard wired brains preferring low and safe altitudes, and this bridge was very high and did not give the appearance of safety. As the men were approached immediately after crossing their hearts were still racing and they experienced physiological arousal. In the second condition the men were allowed to rest for a while after crossing, and had a chance to calm down somewhat, before the woman approached. They too were also given the phone number and the opportunity to call later for more information.

What would we predict would be the outcome from Schacter's two-step theory? In the first condition the men had just experienced physiological arousal and were primed to find a plausible explanation. The most plausible cause for what they felt was the crossing of the bridge, but the beautiful woman made the stronger impression. Was the arousal due to the presence of the woman? In fact the results showed that significantly more men who were approached having just crossed the bridge called the woman subsequently to ask for a date, whereas few did if they were approached after resting. In other words the men misattributed the cause of their arousal from the true source, the crossing of the bridge, to the more powerful stimuli found in the lovely woman. Misattribution of arousal has also been found in other studies (Sinclair, Hoffman, Mark, Martin, & Pickering, 1994).

6.3 Cognitive appraisal theory: Emotion follows cognitive interpretation
Some researchers have noted that we sometimes experience emotion when there is no physiological arousal (Roseman & Smith, 2001; Russell & Barrrett, 1999; Scherer & Schorr, 2001). Cognitive appraisal theories explain that sometimes emotions follow cognition, after we determine the meaning of the event or situation. We appraise the event in terms of implications being good or bad, and what caused the event. A colleague is given a promotion, how do you interpret that event. If you live in a professional world of zero sum game behavior where someone's promotion gives you less of a chance to advance, you may feel envy and later anger. However, if you are already at the top of the game and can advance no further you might feel happy. Suppose you have helped the colleague? Then perhaps you can attribute his or her success to your advice and assistance and feel pride (Tesser, 1988).

The main point is that in cognitive arousal theories the arousal comes after cognition, after attributing meaning and cause to the event. Arousal does not always precede emotion. Sometimes we feel the emotion, as we begin to fully understand the implications of what has happened and how the situation has changed. The two-step theory and cognitive appraisal theories complement each other as previous arousal is explained by the two-step theory, and interpretation followed by arousal explains emotion from the cognitive appraisal perspective.

7. Introspection: An unreliable source of self-knowledge
We can also learn about ourselves by "looking inside" and examining our own thoughts and feelings. You find yourself in an emergency situation when a man is drowning and immediately jump in the water to save him. Afterwards you think about the event, and come to the conclusion that the reaction was consistent with who you are, with your self-concept. Sometimes looking for inside knowledge can provide accurate responses, other times it can be misleading. You may think introspection is so obvious a source of self-knowledge that it is routine for most people. In fact we spend little time thinking about ourselves (Wilson, 2002). Even when we do introspect, the true reasons for behavior may not be part of the

conscious process. In one study (Csiszentmihaly & Figurski, 1982) the participants wore a beeper that sounded off some 7 –9 times a day. Each time the beeper sounded the respondents were asked to record their thoughts and moods that were subsequently content analyzed. From all these responses the investigators determined that only 8 percent of all responses were about the self. Since life is about survival it is not surprising that much more thought was given to work, but nevertheless it suggests that the self is not a favorite object of contemplation.

Self-awareness theory contains the idea that people focus attention on the self in order to evaluate behavior in terms of meeting internal standards and values (Carver, 2003; Duval & Silvia, 2002). Only the psychopath would spend no time in being self-conscious and trying to objectively evaluate the self. Bundy, the serial killer spent the very last moments of his life trying to rationalize his behavior attributing his deeds to pornography. Of course the opposite is also true, some people have rigid moral systems and spend much time in self-accusation and self-blame. Most of us fall in-between, and from time to time become aware of discrepancies between behavior and moral beliefs. At times such self-awareness can be very unpleasant and motivate improvement and changes in life (Fejfar & Hoyle, 2002; Mor & Winquist, 2002). When self-awareness becomes too unpleasant we seek escape. Is that the reason so many people spend a good part of their lives watching television (Moskalenko & Heine, 2002)? The popularity of soaps could be understood as a way of solving personal problems by identifying with characters outside the self. Some escape is necessary in a stressful world. It becomes non adaptive when it substitutes for real answers to the person's life and challenges.

At times escape takes the route of alcohol or drug abuse. When people drink to excess they can at least temporarily divert attention away from the self, although the day after may bring back unpleasant anxiety. The fact that so many people worldwide are involved in drug abuse is a testimony to how unpleasant self-awareness can be (Hull, Young, Jouriles, 1986). Religious devotion can also be a way to escape self-focus, and find forgiveness for not living up to moral standards. Like drug abuse, some religious focuses are self-destructive when the well-being of the self is totally ignored. What comes to mind are the suicide bombers who seek total escape to "paradise" in acts of self-destruction. At other times self-awareness can be pleasant. When you graduate from the university or professional school, or complete other significant achievements you may rightly feel enhanced in your self-awareness (Silvia & Abele, 2002). Sometimes self-awareness can help us avoid moral pitfalls when we are tempted to ignore some moral prompting. So self-awareness can serve both positive as well as aversive roles in human psychology.

One problem with introspection is that it may not tell us the real reasons for our feelings since these may lie outside our awareness. (Wilson, 2002). You find yourself instantly attracted to someone, how do you explain such feelings to yourself? Is it purely physical stimuli, or is it something else? Have you discussed important issues and found yourself in agreement, and you believe the attraction is based on similarity? People at times feel an instant chemistry (called that because we have no other explanation), but the real reason for our feelings escapes self-awareness. Introspection may not be able to access the causes of many feelings because we are simply unaware of the reasons. Most people will come up with plausible explanations, but these may in fact be untrue or incomplete.

Growing up in our societies we all have causal theories about feelings and behavior. For example many people believe that mood is affected by the amount of sleep, whereas mood is in fact independent of preceding sleep (Niedenthal & Kitayama, 1994; Wegner, 2002). Our legal system gives women custody of children based on the common belief that they are the best custodians. Yet we know that women also commit infanticide, and child abuse. Often causal theories are simplifications or simply not true, and we can make incorrect judgments about our behavior or actions. Sometimes influences that are under the screen of awareness are the deciding factor in behavior. In one study of clothing preference people evaluated clothing of identical quality. Whereas their causal theories might promote the idea that choice was based on quality, the investigators showed that it was the position of the clothing on the display table that mattered. The clothing that was placed farther to the right was preferred (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). Most people would intuitively reject that idea, but it was the causal factor, perhaps dictated by brain hemispheric dominance. In all, this research shows that we should use caution in accepting causes derived from introspection about our behavior. We may come up with very plausible reasons, but they may be incorrect, and unimportant in the final analysis.

8. Organizational functions of the Social self

Self-knowledge takes on many forms including the beliefs we have of ourselves, our self-esteem, our memories, and especially in the west of what we think are distinctive attributes. Self-knowledge describes our social beliefs, our roles and obligations, and our relational beliefs that refer to our identity as part of families and community. Furthermore it describes our personal beliefs with respect to our traits, abilities and other attributes (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, & Ethier, 1995). Self-knowledge performs primarily a constricting and narrowing influence on perceptions. We construe the current situation with information from previous history thereby overlooking what might be novel. Information and experiences are made to fit our preconceived ideas about the self. In general information that can be integrated into what we already know about ourselves, our schemas, is more easily recalled. This self-reference effect has been demonstrated in several studies (Klein & Kihlstrom, 1986; Klein & Loftus, 1988). So self-knowledge not only shapes what we are likely to remember, but makes recall more efficient (Rogers, Kuiper, & Kirker, 1977).

8.1 Self-schemas: Structured cognitions about self-relevant concepts

What are the dimensions you use to think about important matters? Do you consider yourself an independent person? Do you want to do everything on your own rather than rely on assistance from parents or spouses? Are you hardnosed about immigrants in your country? Then you might think the country's future depends on how global migration is solved. Self-schemas is defined as our organized thinking about important matters that are readily available in memory.

If peace as a concept was an important dimension you would have a storehouse of memories and beliefs readily available to comment on the ever-growing conflicts in the world. Some of the beliefs might explain the causes of conflict as for example derived from greed, intolerance, or the desire to control oil resources. One schema might define the solution to conflict is to treat everyone equitably. For each relevant issue your preexisting knowledge is organized for readily available responses. When we possess schemas it allows us to quickly identify and recognize situations that are schema relevant (Kendzierski & Whitaker, 1997). We judge other's behavior and essence according to their similarity to our own personality. One study asked the respondents to rate themselves and twenty other people. The results showed that the dimensions the respondents found important in rating themselves were also employed in rating others. The execution of Saddam Hussein was a grim affair. However, you may have noted that he went to his death with great personal courage and dignity. If you value bravery in the face of annihilation your opinion of Saddam Hussein might have changed somewhat, independent of your evaluation of his policies as a political leader. We tend to use self-knowledge in an egocentric fashion when evaluating others. If scholarship is important to you, you may apply strict standards in judging the scholastic work and ability of others (Dunning & Cohen, 1992).

We cannot attend to everything in the environment. We selectively attend to those situations that are most relevant to the self. Self-schemas allow us to access information quickly and respond efficiently (Markus, 1977). Self-schemas also are restrictive and prevent information from being evaluated if it is seen as inconsistent with what we already believe.
Most people display self-image bias (Lewicki, 1983). Again culture may play a role. In the west the self-bias exists, because the self is construed independently. Asian students, on the other hand, are more likely to say they are similar to others rather than others are similar to them. Therefore in Asian self-construal, the other person becomes the standard for comparison. In one study on being the center of attention (Cohen & Gunz, 2002) the researchers showed that self-knowledge among Asian people use the perspective derived from others. In comparing Asian students with those who were native to Canada they found that Canadians were more likely to assess the situation from their own independent perspective, whereas Asians took the perspective of other persons in describing similar situations.

An important property of self-schemas is the sense of stability that they confer on the self-concept. The feeling that we have that we are essentially the same person over time, that the core of the self remains the same (Caspi & Roberts, 2001). For example children who are identified as shy as toddlers still remain shy at age 8 (Kagan, 1989), and have problems with social interaction later in life (Caspi, Elder, & Bem, 1988). Whatever we are in early life is likely to remain over time as we behave consistent and selectively to our self-schemas. Consistence is true for functional and alas also for maladaptive behavior. We are likely to remember information that is consistent with early self-schemas and disregard disconfirming events. As we review the past, self-schemas are employed to confirm our present self-concept and we resist thinking about discrepant or novel information (Ross, 1989).

8.2 Self-regulation

An important aspect of self-schemas is the concept of the possible self. Possible selves are our conceptions that propel us into the future in search of goals and achievements (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Some of us grow up thinking that we like a particular career. Envisioning ourselves as doctors, trade people, or mechanics leads us to the training required and sustains the motivation necessary to reach the goals. Those who have a vision of future possible selves work harder at accomplishing relevant tasks (Ruvolo & Markus, 1992). Self-schemas have obvious adaptive value. They not only allow us to quickly identify relevant situations and recall appropriate and effective behaviors from memory. They also guide our behavior as we think of what is possible in the future.

So the self serves regulatory functions determining people's choices, and their plans for the future (Baumeister, & Vohs, 2003; Carver & Scheier, 1998). We appear to be the only species capable of long-term planning. Plans for our educational goals, or for family related matters like acquiring an ideal home, requires a self capable of self-regulation. In self-regulation a finite amount of energy is available. If we spend much self-regulative energy during the day we have less left over at night. Is that why couples have more arguments after a long hard day at work? (Baumeister, & Hetherington, 1996; Vohs & Hetherington, 2000). Research shows that dieters are more likely to fail at night when they are tired. Previous smokers are more likely to take up the habit again after experiencing adversity, bulimics are more likely to binge eat after a long day of self-control. With only so much energy available self-control has limits. We all need rest periods to develop the energy necessary to achieve health related goals.

Our self-regulation is determined to some extent by the culture in which we were socialized (Dhawan, Roseman, Naidu, Thapa, & Rettek, 1995). A study comparing Japanese with American college students demonstrated a cultural difference consistent with interdependent and independent societies. Typically American college students perceive of themselves in terms of personal traits. The independent self-construal emphasizes that which makes the person distinct. Self-regulation pertaining to personal achievement would rank high as an important trait in independent cultures. On the other hand Japanese students defined themselves much more in terms of social roles recognizing their relationship to family and society.

8.3 The stable versus the working self-concept

A stable concept is the sense of self-continuity from early memories to the present. However, some situations call for specific attributes that are part of a temporary working self-concept. The citizen soldier may have a stable self-concept that includes a working career and family life. However, when he goes to war the situation requires different attributes that become part of a working or temporary self. This working self-concept may involve a willingness to engage in violent behavior guiding action while in the war zone. Sometimes behavior in the war zone may permanently change a person, and the temporary self becomes part of the stable self. Many members of the Armed Forces returned from the war in Vietnam with permanent scars affecting their relationships and trust in other people in their civilian life. The temporary self guides what goes in a specific situation, but may itself become part of the stable self (Ehrlinger & Dunning, 2003).

In less traumatic circumstances the working self-concept may operate on the periphery of the self, and when the individual returns to normal circumstances the stable self takes over (Nezlek & Plesko, 2001). In one study (Crocker, Sommers, & Luhtanen, 2002) the investigators studied applicants to graduate school. The respondents were asked to complete self-esteem measures on days when they received acceptance or rejection notices from graduate school programs. For those respondents whose self-esteem depended a great deal on scholastic achievement acceptance to programs increased self-esteem significantly, whereas rejection decreased self-esteem. In one graduate program rejections and acceptances were noted on a comparative poster for all students applying for Ph.D. programs (KSL). A similar enhancement reaction occurred. Those who were accepted enhanced the self. Whose idea do you think it was? Probably those applicants who were very confident of acceptance and sought further evidence for self-enhancement in the eyes of fellow students!

9. Motivational properties of the self-concept
A major function of the self-concept is its relationship to motivation (Higgins, 1999; Sedikides & Showronski, 1993). What is it that causes us to make plans for the future? Our possible selves refer to our possibilities, what we can become or hope to be in the future (Cross & Markus, 1991; Markus & Nurius, 1986). The self-concept also includes social and cultural, and religious standards that we utilize in deciding on our behavior. Feelings of shame or guilt are associated with these aspects of the self (Higgins, 1987; 1999). We compare our actions not only to the actual self, who we believe we are, but also to the ideal self, what we

should be including all our aspirations. The "ought" self also has motivating properties which refers to the duties and obligations we feel from family and society, and whether we behave appropriately. These various aspects of the self have proven to have motivational properties both in terms of cognition as well as behavior (Shah & Higgins, 1991).

*9.1 Discrepancies and motivatio*n

When we observe discrepancies between the actual self and what we think we ought to be we often experience fear or anxiety (Boldero & Francis, 2000). Loss of self-esteem might be defined as a discrepancy between real and actual compared to the ideal or ought selves. The greater the discrepancy the more dejected the person feels (Higgins & Bargh, 1987; Moretti & Higgins, 1990). These effects arrive from what Freud would call the superego, the early socialization that incorporates parental standards into the self-concept. The ideal self has a special influence when warm and accepting parents raise children. Children, on the other hand who have been raised by more rejecting parents think of behavior primarily in terms of meeting standards and avoiding rejection (Manian, Strauman, & Denney, 1998).

In recalling scenes of embarrassment Asians saw it through the eyes of other persons rather than from the perspective of personal feelings. (Chau, Leu, & Nisbett, 2005). People raised in independent cultures are more likely to look to the ideal self for guidance in regulating behavior, and be motivated to reduce discrepancies. People who are raised in interdependent environments pay more attention to the demands made by family and society as expressed by the "ought self" concept (Lee, Acker, & Gardner, 2000). The route to well-being is to regulate behavior to reduce or eliminate discrepancies between these aspects of the self and the goals they pursue in life (Bianco, Higgins, Klem, 2003).

9.2 Motivated by consistent and accurate selves

We all experience a sense of the self that is stable from childhood through the varying stages of life. Perhaps consistency in the self-concept is partially a cultural need as our rationalized society expects consistency in behavior to plan life-sustaining activities. Without consistency, a factory could not plan a work program, without a sense of continuity in traits and abilities the individual could not plan for the future, and society would be unable to educate. We need to believe that there is something within us that is consistent over time (Swann, 1983).

The motivating properties of self-consistency can be observed in a study by Swann and Read (1981). The participants were given feedback that was either consistent or inconsistent with their self-conceptions. Results showed that the students spent more time studying feedback consistent with the self-concept than inconsistent information. The need for self-affirmation can also be observed in our selective behavior. We tend to interact only with those who confirm our self-concepts. If we have a high estimation of our scholarly abilities we probably make friends with other students who also think we are good students and affirm our self-concept (Katz & Beach, 2000). We remember information better that confirms our self-concept (Story, 1998), and holds consistent self-beliefs as members of groups (Chen,Chen, & Shaw, 2004). This search for self-affirmation is modified by self-esteem. People who possess high self-esteem are willing to entertain both positive and negative self-affirming information. Those with low self-esteem want mainly positive self-affirming information whether accurate or not (Bernichon, Cook, & Brown. 2003).

Having an accurate self-concept has obvious adaptive value. To make plans for the future and experiencing success requires a fairly accurate self-concept including realistic assessments of our traits and abilities. Many of the tasks we choose are based on self-assessment of aptitudes. As discussed later all people are motivated by a desire to save face and impress others, so we are likely to pick objectives closely related to what we think we can do (Trope, 1983).

9.3 Our Self-worth: Motivated by the desire to elevate self-esteem

Culture also affects self-esteem. Those living in independent cultures experience primarily ego-based emotions. Accomplishments are a source of personal pride. Those who live in interdependent cultures experience satisfaction or frustrations based on their connectedness to others. (Mesquita, 2001). Parents and their children are for example, connected intimately in the children's scholastic achievement. Self-esteem is likewise dependent on the interdependent form of self-construal. (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994; Yik, Bond, Paulhus, 1998; Diener & Diener, 1995). Social approval is a primary motivator in interdependent cultures, and a better predictor of life satisfactions. In independent cultures life satisfaction is more a function of individual emotions (Suh, Diener, Oishi, & Triandis, 1998).

Our self-esteem is a major dimension of our self-concept. Self-esteem is a global evaluative assessment we make of our worth. Most psychologists employ simple surveys to assess self-esteem (e.g. Larsen, 1969). Those who have high self-esteem feel relatively good about their self-worth, those with low self-esteem feel some ambivalence, and a relatively few feel self-loathing. Trait self-esteem refers to consistent levels of self-esteem over time probably determined from early experiences with success or failure. Trait self-esteem is defined by self-conceptions of competence and efficacy in various areas of achievement. Trait self-esteem feelings remain consistent over time (Block & Robins, 1993).

We also experience momentary changes in self-esteem as a result of development or from the impact of significant events (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). Male self-esteem tends to increase during adolescence, whereas female self-esteem falls during the same time (Block & Robins, 1993). At various times in our lives we may experience enhancing events that improve self-esteem. A large raise in salary or promotion at work may improve self-esteem. On the other hand we can also experience failure. If you find yourself competing against contemporaries with higher levels of ability the comparison may have negative consequences for your self-esteem (Brown, 1998; Marsh & Parker, 1984).

How comparisons are experienced depend on the relative centrality of the domain of achievement. Is the area of competition central to your self-worth or peripheral (Crocker & Park, 2003)? Professional achievement is central to many people's sense of self-worth. If achievement is appreciated and work is progressing generally in the right direction, self-esteem will enhance; otherwise the blows of misfortunate will probably impact the self-esteem negatively (Crocker, Sommers, & Luhtanen (2002).

Central to a person's self-esteem is the human need to be included. There is probably no more serious punishment in society than solitary confinement. Many prisoners can endure other forms of torture and denigration, but to accept isolation is very difficult. Some researchers assert that self-esteem is simply an index measuring relative inclusion-exclusion (Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995). From an evolutionary perspective it is easy to understand the power of social approval. Those who obtain approval from significant others are more likely to survive and thrive. Approval seeking affects a variety of behaviors (Larsen, 1974a; Larsen, 1974b;Larsen, Martin, Ettinger, & Nelson, 1976; Larsen, 1976a). Those who feel excluded are likely to report low self-esteem. Even our changing feelings correspond to the approval by others (Baumeister, Twenge, & Nuss, 2002).

Self-esteem responds also to temporary conditions. Our moods change from time to time, and the reasons why are not always clear. Temporary mood swings affect self-esteem in either positive or negative directions (Brown, 1998). Even setbacks that have very little real meaning can temporarily reduce self-esteem. For example if your favorite athletic team loses an important game, self-esteem may decline (Hirt, Zillman, Erickson, & Kennedy, 1992).

As noted self-esteem is closely related to the domains we consider most relevant to our self-concept. Most people derive self-esteem from selected human activities. For some self-esteem is based on competence in scholarship or career. For others self-esteem is built on athletic prowess. Yet other people think that success in family and human relationships is of greatest significance. It is really a question of what we value in life. What domains are significant to you, and have you experienced success or failure?

Crocker & Wolfe (2001); and Crocker & Park (2003) have proposed a theory of self-esteem based on domains of self-worth. Self-esteem rises or falls with experiences of success or failure in key areas. Societies and cultures will vary as to what domains are considered important. Independence is a significant value in Western societies and is related to achievement of economic independence and reaching career goals. In interdependent Asian cultures the respect of others and maintenance of successful relationships may be more of a central value. Self-worth is to some degree selected by cultural emphasis and values. Regardless of culture it is important that we do not base self-worth on one or few domains since failure will be less salient if we have many domains of interest and achievement. Failure can be devastating for those who seek achievement in a single domain since they have no fallback position for self-worth.

9.4 Cultural boundaries of self-esteem and self-enhancement

The preoccupation with self-esteem is largely a Western phenomenon. It derives from our cultural values focusing on the individual and personal distinctions. It seems ironic that the rugged individualist valued in the West is vulnerable to feelings of low self-esteem. Westerners do self-report higher levels of self-esteem as compared with interdependent peoples (Dhawan, Roseman, Naidu, Thapa, & Rettek, 1995; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). That finding however, may be attributed to the greater modesty of interdependent peoples, and the greater preoccupation with the self in Western societies. A great deal of energy is spent in Western societies trying to enhance the self, and also supporting the impression management and face work of others to enhance their self-esteem. Americans and Canadians insist they have comparatively more positive qualities than others (Holmberg, Markus, Herzog, & Franks, 1997). The very nature of social interaction in the West, including but not limited to education, media effects, and socializing, encourages a preoccupation with self-esteem.

Being rewarded and praised for achievement is much more common in the West where people as noted seek distinctiveness, whereas in interdependent cultures people are motivated by common goals and self-improvement (Heine, 2005; Crocker & Park, 2004; Norenzayan & Heine, 2004). In Asian cultures self-criticism is common in the pursuit of social harmony and self-improvement. A student from the West who is invited to criticize himself may perceive that invitation as a threat to the self-concept and self-esteem. Cultural differences are rooted in either a preoccupation with self-esteem in the West, or self-improvement in interdependent societies.

Finally, we should keep in mind that cultural differences are abstractions. There are within societies more individual differences than can be found between cultures. Furthermore societies change over time. The individualism of Western societies is a product of recent centuries and the advancement of capitalist economies (Baumeister, 1987; Twenge, 2002). Each generation struggles with the issues related to adaptation, and in a broader sense values that lead to reproductive success. Globalization has produced values held in common by more and more people. In the new world order many countries accept the values of independence promoted in the West. Furthermore, there is evidence that many cultures are becoming more convergent in values and what is required for self-esteem (Heine & Lehman, 2003).

9.5 Preoccupation with self-enhancement

Since self-esteem in Western societies is largely based on independent egos and achievement based distinctions, most people are motivated to enhance self-esteem (Tesser, 1988). We like to see ourselves in the most favorable light possible given the constraints of reality. According to Tesser we accomplish this vicariously by reflection where we enhance ourselves by associating with those who have accomplished significant goals. The pride of parents in their children's achievements is of this type, as is associating with those of social status. Much effort in Western societies goes into convincing others of our value by relating to those who possess status.

According to Tesser we also seek to enhance by social comparison. Social comparison can be used either upward for achievement or downward to enhance our self-esteem. Even in failure one can compare downward for self-enhancement. One is reminded of some countries where students noted a university degree in their vita followed by the word “failed”. Just the mere fact that a student entered a university program attributed higher status compared with those who never started!

On a more personal basis we select friends outside our most salient domains so we can always compare downward. Since these friends may perform well in other areas, the downward comparison can be in both directions. As a general rule we select friends we outperform in our salient domains, but who are talented in other areas. Self-esteem in competitive societies is based on this fundamental idea of ranking higher than someone else. In one study (Tesser, Campbell, & Smith, 1984) the researchers asked grade school children to identify their closest friends, their own most and least important domains or activities, and how good their friends were in these activities. As evidence of self-enhancing Tesser et al found that students rated their own performance as better in the salient areas, whereas they related their friends’ performance as better in areas less self-relevant (the reflection process). In other words the students overestimated their own performance in self-relevant areas, and overestimated their friends’ performance in other domains lending support to both social comparison and reflection processes.

Self-enhancement needs are important, and perhaps of overriding importance for most people (Sedikides, 1993). They are especially important when life has struck a blow in the important domain area. Being refused entrance to a favorite university may be very painful to the aspiring scholar. Threat or failure leads to self-enhancement efforts trying to shore up of self-esteem (Beauregard & Dunning, 1998; Krueger, 1998). Self-enhancement means that we evaluate ourselves more favorably than others (Suls, Lemos, & Stewart, 2002). Our efforts at enhancing self-esteem also affect the memory process. We remember the good and positive features about ourselves, and forget the negative (Sedikides & Green, 2000). We believe we are more altruistic than others (Epley & Dunning, 2000), we think we are happier than others, and less biased (Klar & Giladi, 1999; Pronin, Lin, & Ross, 2002).

There may be times when we acknowledge that we are less than perfect.

However, in our efforts to maintain self-esteem we tend to think that the negative in our performance is less important than the positive (Campbell, 1986; Greve & Wentura, 2003). Not surprisingly we are less likely to falsely enhance when we can get caught in our little self-enhancing lies. If we are poor students we are less likely to boast to our professors about our previous achievements, if we are poor lovers our partners will eventually know. When the truth can not be hidden permanently we are more likely to be modest in our self-aggrandizement (Armor & Taylor, 1998).

9.6 Self-enhancement and stress

The exaggerated self-conceptions produced by self-enhancement can encourage better mental and physical health (Taylor, Kemeny, Reede, Bower, & Grunewald, 2000). That illusions can have positive consequences runs counter to many ideas in psychology. From the perspective of existential psychology self-enhancement is a form of defensive neuroticism, and distorts the real world. Since neurotic behavior is associated with continuous anxiety and stress, self-enhancement should be maladaptive. In one study (Taylor, Lerner, Sherman, Sage & McDowell, 2003) students were asked for their self-assessed personal traits like intelligence and physical attractiveness as compared to their peers. Participants who self-rated higher than their ratings of peers were considered self-enhancing. Later the participants performed tasks designed to create stress as manifested by higher heart rates and blood pressures measures. The results showed that the self-enhancing group had lower heart rates and blood pressure responses, and recovered to normal measurements more quickly. Self-enhancers also had lower cortisol levels than did the comparative group of non-enhancers. In short the self-enhancers had healthier responses, tended to be more optimistic, had feelings of personal control, and a supportive social group that all contributed to the lower cortisol levels. These experimental results support the contention that self-enhancement leads to healthier physiological and endocrine functions.

9.7 Threat and self-enhancement

When people are confronted with threats to self-worth they typically shore up self-worth by reaffirming in other unrelated attributes of the self (Steele, 1988; Aronson, Blanton, & Cooper, 1995; Koole, Smeets, van Knippenberg, & Dijksterhuis, 1999). Self-affirmation theory applies only to those respondents who have high self-esteem. In one study students high and low in self-esteem were led to believe they had either failed or succeeded on a test of intellectual ability.

Respondents who were high in self-esteem, but who had been led to believe they had failed, exaggerated their positive social qualities. Respondents with low self-esteem generalized their failure experience as one already consistent with what they believed about themselves. Since those with high self-esteem believe they have many other positive traits they immediately seek to reaffirm their strengths in an unrelated area after perceived threat (Dodgson & Wood, 1998). The healthy nature of self-affirmation can be observed by the fact that the respondents feel good about themselves in the aftermath, and are strong enough to entertain potential negative information about the self. (Sherman, Nelson, & Steele, 2000).

There is no greater threat than that of personal annihilation. Terror management theory asserts that the threat of death leads people to seek ways to minimize or manage this vulnerability (Greenberg, Porteus, Simon, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1995). The threat of personal annihilation is kept in control by two mechanisms. First of all self-esteem helps the individual feel a valued person in a meaningful universe and this controls to some degree the threat of death. In the face of imminent death people have a need to reaffirm the importance of their lives, and the legacy they have created including assessments of meaningful work, and personal relationships.

Secondly, in a world-view that provides hope for the future, or at least makes some sense of the present assists in controlling threats to mortality. Conformity to cultural expectations and values is another means by which people control fear (Greenberg, Lieberman, Solomon, Greenberg, Arndt, & Simon, 1992). The familiar is soothing and allows the individual to see continuity even when personal existence is ending. At the same time when confronted with the fear of death, people also seek affiliation (Wisman & Koole, 2003). We can observe that need in the increasing popularity of the hospice movement. From anecdotal experiences (KSL) death threat is lowered when the patient is under the care of hospice, and the individual feels less lonely or isolated through the efforts of volunteers accompanying the patient on the last journey.

When people are scared by threats to mortality they are also more likely to act with aggression toward those who challenge their world-view (McGregor et al, 1998). Hostile reactions can be observed in the anger displayed by people who are related to soldiers serving the US army in Iraq or other theaters. The slogan “support the troops”, flag waving, and shrill denunciations of war opponents, emerge most likely from the perceived threat to mortality to the loved one.

Nations mobilizing for war have known how to manipulate the threat of mortality in order to energize the war effort, and demonize the enemy. That story continues throughout the world today.

9.8 Group membership and false self-esteem

The German people after the First World War were a morally defeated people, on the battlefield, and in estimation of the international community. The great depression that followed created economic insecurity and a loss of faith in contemporary society. It was a perfect time for the great manipulators of history to gain power by appeals to false self-esteem and false pride. The Nazi's sought to restore false self-esteem by use of in-group symbols and by being willing to find scapegoats for social frustrations. Although the Nazi's appearance on the stage of history was extreme in destruction and victimization, fundamentally they were no different than any other genocidal group. The genocide in Rwanda and Darfur were caused by similar in-group identification and the demonization of adversaries. The concentration camp that the Palestinian people have lived in the past half a century is motivated by the similar fears that caused the victimization of the Jewish people by the Nazi's. We seem to have learned nothing from history and so repeat the crimes derived from in-group based false self-esteem.

In contemporary society the phenomenon of gang violence takes a similar path. Gang members typically come from poor and deprived environments ripe and ready for exploitation by misleaders. Typically gang membership is compensation for all that is missing in a young person's life. As a result self-esteem is derived from gang pride emphasized by the use of symbols and colors. The Bloods (red color) and the Crips (blue color) are common criminal gangs in the US. Typically gang members display an elevated sense of self-worth and grandiosity not supported by achievements or good works (Wink, 1991). The fact that gang members possess false self-esteem can be observed in their sensitivity to any perceived insult or denigration. Children are shot dead in the streets of the US for imagined insults to the colors of another gang, revealing the fundamental insecurity underlying gang enhancement.

In fact psychopaths possess the same grandiose sense of self-worth (Hare, 1993) and are responsible for a majority of violent crimes. Psychopathic criminals also have inflated views of self-worth combined with hypersensitivity to perceived threats or denigration. The murders and bullies emerging out of gang culture have no genuine self-esteem, but rather are narcissistic and arrogant individuals.

Is it a coincidence that members of the White prison gang "Aryan brotherhood" use Nazi symbols? This false sense of self-esteem is historically responsible for genocidal deeds whether slavery, modern forms of terrorism, or other forms of violent behavior (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996). In fact all gangs of history, from those led by Hitler to the military fascists led by Pinochet, have in common grandiose feelings of superiority and arrogance and a deficit in real genuine self-esteem.

10. A sense of well-being: How do we reach that blessed state?
In traveling to other countries one can often observe the apparent sense of well-being expressed by people poor in material possessions. Yet in our modern world we are taught that consumption is the road to happiness, and having money to consume produces life satisfaction. However, even in modern capitalist societies money makes little difference to a sense of well-being (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). People adjust to whatever the economic and social circumstances that are present within some degree of latitude. Of course, if people live with deprivation from poverty in the form of hunger or untreated health issues, well-being is impacted. Well-being is related to the quality of our life experiences (van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). The here and now is important to the enjoyment of life. Many people delay living to some point in the inaccessible future. They perpetually look for the joy of weekend, the vacation, the retirement, and eventually a place in heaven, but fail to enjoy the journey itself.

Realistic expectations play an important role in well-being. If expectations are too high, or if you do not have the resources necessary, frustration may follow. Being able to withdraw from unrealistic goals and move in a different direction is related to satisfaction (Wrosch, Scheier, Miller, Schulz, & Carver, 2003). A sense of well-being probably is a consequence of the person you are. Some people see a glass half empty; others see the wine bottle next to the glass is still nearly full. We can focus on aspects of life that are going well for us, or we can concentrate on reliving all our failure. Important to well-being is the pursuit of goals that reflect who we are, and which are consistent with basic human values.

Those who live in poverty in third world countries may never have the same degree of freedom that we possess, but that in and of itself does not prevent a meaningful life. Regardless of where we live in the World we all have basic needs for self-directed lives, for autonomy, for establishing competence in mastering the social environment, and having supportive social network (Kang, Shaver, Sue, Min, & Jing, 2003). Being optimistic obviously matters, and maintaining positive emotions over time is associated with a greater sense of well-being (Updegraff, Gable, & Taylor, 2004).

10.1 The route to well-being: Complexity of attributes and self-efficacy

Central attributes have a significant affect on the sense of well-being. Some of us put all our achievement eggs into one or few baskets. For students whose self-esteem is bound up with academic performance and little else, a low grade may be devastating. Others look to achievements in a number of areas to sustain positive feelings about the self. Students can also have hobbies, special talents, a wide-ranging mind, may participate in athletics, and much more. As noted for respondents with complex self-concepts setbacks in any one area produce less vulnerability since they have other achievements to sustain positive feelings. On the other hand respondents with simple self-concepts are vulnerable when experiencing setbacks, as they have nothing else to sustain their self-concept (Linville, 1985). People with simple self-conceptions may feel good when successful, but are likely to be depressed in cases of failure (Showers & Ryff, 1996). Self-complexity produces a buffer against the inevitable setbacks and adversity of life. That is true for those holding complex positive self-concepts. Those with negative self-views are not going to feel better by having more complex negative self-concepts, since that just provides more reasons to stay depressed.

Having feelings of self-efficacy also creates a sense of well-being. The lack of self-efficacy is probably the reason that most dieters fail to stay with the program. Many people have little confidence that they can achieve the weight loss they want, and they then behave appropriate to these expectations of failure. Others have had experiences of success upon which to build self-efficacy. This is the time of year when one of the authors goes on an annual diet called the “ keep your mouth shut diet”. Based on past success experiences there is confidence that this approach will work again and bring down weight to a more optimal level. There is no doubt that this success story will be repeated.

Self-efficacy probably grows out of early experiences with parents and teachers. Early success leads to stable self-conceptions of efficacy in a variety of areas. Self-efficacy produces a sense of personal control giving encouragement to a person’s planning for the future. Feelings of self-efficacy also help in coping with possible setbacks by self-regulating and changing behavior (Pham, Taylor, & Seeman, 2001).

Self-efficacy reduces the stress of life and produces more optimism about the future. In the long run self-efficacy produces basic approach or avoidance orientations to life. Some develop a behavioral activation system based on positive happenings of the past. Others with negative experiences develop an inhibition system that prevents the individual from undertaking important challenges for lack of confidence (Gable, Reis, & Elliott, 2000). Some think of these basic approaches as stable personality traits. For example, extraversion is a behavioral activation based on social intelligence and success. On the other hand neuroticism is an extreme example of avoidance (Carver, Sutton, & Sceier, 2000).

10.2 Positive illusions: Another road to well-being

Self-knowledge can affect our well-being. We need realistic self-conceptions to make good decisions and be successful. However, positive illusions about the self can be enhancing, and encourage and motivate behavior (Taylor & Brown, 1988; 1994). Many psychologists in humanistic and existential psychology (including Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow) have encouraged us to accept life as it is and believe that self-illusions are fundamental in neurotic behavior.

Contrary to existential views it appears that unrealistic positive self-concepts are in fact related to well-being. Most people think that positive traits describe them better than negative dimensions. In accepting negative self-descriptions we dilute the effect on the self-concept by asserting that we share these negative attributes with many others. We reason that the flaws we possess are not important since we share them with many people, whereas our positive traits are distinctive.

Those who are well adjusted tend to have an exaggerated sense of control over their lives. People often think that ritual will affect the outcome of life. On game shows one can hear the player “command” the game to perform in the winning direction when it in fact the outcome is based on randomness. In a study on lottery tickets (Langer, 1975) the experimenter tried to buy back lottery tickets which all had the exact same probability of yielding a winning result. Those buyers who had chosen their lottery ticket based on some superstition, held out for a larger return when asked to sell the ticket prior to the drawing. On the other hand depressed people are more accurate in their appraisals of control, but are of course less happy (Abramson, Metalsky, & Alloy, 1989).

Self-enhancing perceptions are adaptive (Taylor, Lerner, Sherman, Sage, & McDowell, 2003). Even if our optimism is not justified we feel better about the future based on positive illusions. Positive illusions give us feelings of control where in fact we have none. Believing in the heaven to come may be a positive illusion that nevertheless helps the believer cope with randomness and absurdity. Should we encourage people to have positive beliefs even if they are illusionary? Some research has supported the idea that optimism and false sense of control may help people feel better about themselves and feel happier (Regan, Snyder, & Kassin, 1995). Do we need a new psychology based on positive illusions since at least in some areas they are adaptive and not neurotic?

When we feel good about ourselves it has positive consequences for our social relationships. You must have noted that when you feel good about life you are more open and agreeable. Positive self-regard fosters relationships, within some limits (Taylor et al, 2003). However, people will get tired of the self-promoter, and self-aggrandizement can also lead to alienation. As in the cases of most other behavior, self-enhancement is an issue of balance. Have you ever met perpetually happy people so self-enhancing that you shake your head and tell yourself "that can't be for real"?

People living in the West are likely to have unrealistic optimism about the future (Aspinwall & Brunhart, 1996; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997; Seligman, 1991). The optimism is personalized since they believe positive events will happen to them, but not necessarily to others. Unrealistic optimism emerges out of people's egocentrism, where most people focus on their own outcomes and ignore happenings to others (Kruger & Burros, 2004).

In any event, having unrealistically positive self-perceptions lead to exaggerated sense of control and unrealistic optimism. Overall these illusions improve well-being by creating positive moods, healthier social relationships, and by promoting goal directed behavior. Few of us would start any journey, even an easy one, if we did not believe the outcome would be positive. In struggling against tyranny like in Burma where the state holds all the power, few people would work for reform or change unless they had the positive illusions that in the near future or historically their efforts would be crowned with success.

The ego-centrism can go too far (Colvin & Block, 1994). The narcissist typically endorses extreme self-enhancement illusions. However, self-promotion turns off most people in the long run. Narcissists have the tendency to blow their own horn too long and people reject such behavior (Paulhus, 1998). Longitudinal studies have shown a further downside of positive illusions. Students who exaggerate their academic abilities eventually come up against reality and experience failure at school and loss of self-esteem (Robins, & Beer, 2001; Colvin, Block, & Funder, 1995). So not all forms of positive illusions serve the function of well-being. It would appear that we need some positive illusions to become motivated to reach goals, but not so illusionary that we experience constant failure. A balance must be created between the positive illusions and accurate self-concepts.

10.3 Culture and positive illusions

Cultures show significant differences in the endorsement of positive illusions. Westerners are more likely to endorse these when compared to Asian peoples (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997). In considering academic abilities Japanese hold fewer positive illusions compared to Western students, and display less unrealistic optimism when compared to Canadian students (Heine & Lehman, 1995; Heine, Kitayama, Lehman, Takata, Ide, Leung, Matsumoto, 2002). In a study of 42 nations Sastry and Ross (1998) found that Asians were less likely to feel they had complete control over their lives, whereas people from Western societies displayed unrealistic optimism.

So from a cultural perspective we must conclude that positive self-delusions do not automatically lead to well-being. In independent societies well-being is a construct closely tied to positive views of self, control, and optimism. In Asian societies well-being is tied more to interdependent self-conceptions. The fulfillment of social roles and expectations is fundamental to self-construal in Asia, and satisfaction in these areas is more likely to bring a sense of well-being (Suh, Diener, Oishi, & Triandis, 1998).

11. Impression management: We are actors on the stage of life

Have you noticed that your behavior changes depending on the person with whom you converse and the objectives of the interaction? With your parents you act with a measure of love and social obligation, with teachers you are courteous trying to produce a favorable impression, with a baby you are natural and feel no need to impress. These varying responses can also be called situational conformity. Before interaction we have an awareness of the person, the situation and the objectives. We mold our behavior to make a correct and useful impression, especially on those who have status and power. The psychopath is perhaps the most skillful in impression management. How did Bundy, the serial killer, create enough trust in young women, so they accompanied him to his car where they were overpowered. He did it by putting his arm in a sling, and looking helpless he appealed for help from sympathetic coeds.

In a broader way we want to be accepted by others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). As noted there is psychologically nothing more painful than social exclusion. Some societies use that knowledge to torture prisoners whether at Guantanamo in Cuba, or in special penitentiaries in the US, where prisoners sit in a cage like cells for 23 hours a day with no social interaction. We can think of the death penalty as the ultimate form of social exclusion and torture that on the face is both cruel and rather unusual. As noted earlier in this chapter social exclusion is related to self-esteem. Researchers have also demonstrated that social exclusion is among the most painful and stressful conditions known to humanity (Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003; Twenge, Cantanese, & Baumeister, 2003). We self-monitor so that our behavior is acceptable and we will be included.

We can see by these examples that there is a significant difference between people's public and private selves. Much that we have discussed in this chapter pertains to the private self, the executive "I" as decision maker or regulator of behavior and how it is influenced by the social context. We operate in a social context of no small importance, and learn early that others have power to make life better or worse. The public self is devoted to impression management, where we try to convey an image and convince others that this image is our true self. We work hard to get other people to see us the way we want to be seen (Goffman, 1959; Knowles & Sibicky, 1990; Spencer, Fein, Zanna, & Olson, 2003).

We are actors on the stage of life concerned with self-presentation and the monitoring of our behavior. Impression management is about convincing others to believe in the "face" we are presenting. We try to control what others think of us because doing so has utility in terms of material, relational, and self-relevant advantages. Goffman was probably the first to systematically examine how we construct our identities in public. He maintained that much of our public behavior is governed by claims we make in an effort to maintain a positive face. The image we want to convey Goffman calls face (see also Baumeister, 1982; Brown, 1998; Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

Impression management follows a certain script we have memorized to be used whenever we interact with others. We also expect others to play their roles and to respect the identity we convey. This is a mutual support society since other people depend on us to honor the claims they make. To lose face is very painful, and in Asian cultures can be unbearable. We want other people to respect, not the private self, but the one we present to the world. We are all actors trying to be convincing to our audience.

11.1 Ingratiation

In the process of impression management we can employ several strategies (Jones & Pittman, 1982). The term "brownnosing" is used to describe those who try to ingratiate themselves to gain advantage with powerful others. Ingratiation is a frequently used strategy to make ourselves more likeable with the powerful (Gordon, 1996; Vonk, 2002). Nothing is more effective than sincerely meant praise in promoting liking relationships. On the other hand if the praise is for ulterior motives, and most of us can feel that, the ingratiation may backfire (Kauffman & Steiner, 1968).

11.2 Self-handicapping

Another strategy to protect face is self-handicapping. Our face is so important that we often engage in self-defeating behaviors to avoid losing face. In self-handicapping we set up excuses prior to any performance, so if we do poorly we have an excuse that exonerates the public self (Arkin & Oleson, 1998; Thill & Curry, 2000). Students may self-handicap prior to an important exam. Spending the night drinking with friends provides the alibi for poor test performance, and therefore does not reflect on the image created among fellow students. In one study (Berglas & Jones, 1978) students were offered a chance to either take a performance enhancing drug, or one that would impair test taking. The respondents were placed in one of two conditions. One group was led to believe that they were going to succeed on the test, the other group were led to believe that failure was likely. The participants who thought failure was likely preferred the performance-inhibiting drug even though that would result in poor test performance. From the point of view of self-handicapping, students would rather fail, but have a good alibi for failure, than take the chance for success, but have no excuse if they failed.

Self-handicapping can have serious consequences for health. Condoms have proven an effective preventive of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, yet from 30 to 65 percent of respondents reported that they were embarrassed when buying these health-promoting devices. Somehow buying condoms violates many people's self-presentations as perhaps non-sexual or at least not promiscuous. In this day of increasing skin cancer many continue to sunbathe to excess to meet a self-presentation of beauty and ironically of health. Social approval continues as a basic motivation for impression management (Leary & Jones, 1993).

Some self-handicapping is not so obvious. We may simply prepare within ourselves ready-made excuses for poor performance. We know the material, in fact we feel that we are experts, but we attribute poor performance on tests as due to test anxiety, headaches or being in a bad mood on the day of performance. In the process of self-handicapping we may become self-fulfilling prophecies and come to believe in our excuses. Self-handicappers may become permanent poor performers and fail to establish the parameters for a successful life. It is ironic that the concern underlying self-handicapping, i.e., to be liked for the face being conveyed, may in fact have opposite results. Most people see through the charade and do not like those who spend their efforts at self-handicapping rather than working (Hirt, McCrea, & Boris, 2003).

11.3 Self-promotion

Impression management is all about making a "good" impression (Schlenker, 1980). Some people use the direct route and self-promote, never tiring in telling others of their many and varied accomplishments. The self-promoter is primarily interested in other people's perceptions of their competence (Jones & Pittman, 1982). Self-promotion depends on the norms of social interaction. In athletic competition a norm of modesty prevails. Therefore it is not in good form to boast of one's own performance, but rather attribute success to the efforts of teammates, coaches, and fans. Normative modesty works best when it is false, and the athlete has cause to boast. Then modesty is a strategy of positive impression management (Cialdini & De Nicholas, 1989).

Other forms of self-promotion are vicarious. We like to enjoy "the reflected glory of others". By associating with successful others we obtain positive associations (Cialdini & De Nicholas, 1989). Oregon State University had a terrible record in football across many decades. During that time few fans attended the games or wore clothing identifying with the team. That all changed when a new coach created a team with a wining record. Now thousands of cars approach the city on game day, with banners, and team symbols. Vicarious self-promotion contributes to positive impressions associated with winning and status, at least in the western world.

11.4 Private versus public self-consciousness

The aforementioned discussion supports the difference between a public self (known to others) and a private self (known only to the self), (Fenigstein, Sceier, & Buss, 1975). Being publicly self-conscious encourages people to engage in face saving and impression management. The ironic aspect about public self-consciousness is that nearly everyone is conscious of his or her audience and painfully aware that others are observing. However, since everyone is focused on the affect of the audience there is really little time left over to actually observe others. A lot of face saving and impression management efforts are wasted because while we are aware of others the focus is on the effect internally. There are individual differences. Those with fragile egos are overly concerned about what others might think about them (again a wasted effort). Insecure people tend to think of themselves in terms of social popularity and approval (Fenigstein, 1984). In public self-consciousness awareness is directed toward what others think, however since everyone shares that attribute, the focus is internally on the effects of the audience and people really do not observe others. Then why be publicly self-conscious?

Some people have private self-consciousness and a greater awareness of internal feelings and thoughts. Those with a private self tend to think of themselves more in terms of their own independent thoughts and feelings. Those with private self-consciousness care little about what others think, but are a rare breed. Due to the long dependency period of humans beings, and the nature of the social self formed by social interactions, private self-consciousness is not only rare, but probably also affected by what others think.

Since we want to be accepted we spend energy and time on self-monitoring (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). Most people want to be socially acceptable and therefore monitor behavior to see if they fit the requirements of the situation. People high in self-monitoring are the true actors on the stage of life. They are situational conformist, switching behavior as required from one situation to the next. Low monitors are more likely to respond to internal impulses or demands, and are less dependent on the social context. Is monitoring adaptive? In one study (Snyder, 1974) patients in a mental hospital scored low on self-monitoring. That finding suggests that to cope effectively with life requires at least some awareness of surroundings and the social demands for appropriate behavior.

11.5 Cultural differences in impression management

In all cultures the social self emerges from social interactions and is formed by the socialization of varying social values. The fundamental difference in cultural values as noted previously is the predominant emphasis on independence in Western cultures, and interdependence in Asian and some other developing societies. The term "saving face" has been associated with Asian cultures and reflects a special sensitivity in maintaining face in these societies. To lose face is to lose identity for interdependent people. Appearance is of great importance. For example, if it is important to have many wedding guests, and if one has an insufficient number of friends attending, one can rent guests (Jordan & Sullivan, 1995). If there are insufficient lamenters at a funeral one can hire professional lamenters to produce appropriate grief display.

In Asian cultures, impression management concerns the measuring up to social roles and expectations whereas in the West there is a greater desire for individual enhancement (Heine & Renshaw, 2002; Sedikides, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003). In fact self-enhancement is ubiquitous in all Western societies while relatively uncommon in interdependent cultures. The various terms discussed in this chapter like self-consciousness and self-regulation take different forms depending on culture (Simon, Pantaleo, & Mummedy, 1995). Yet these cultural differences must be taken with a grain of salt. Culture may account for small amounts of the behavioral variance, and societies are changing as the world is becoming more convergent. At the same time if we want to improve intercultural communications we must have some awareness of cultural values.

Summary

This chapter discusses several dimensions of the social self, self-knowledge and self-esteem. Self-awareness starts at an early age, perhaps as early as nine months, and certainly by age two the child recognizes the self as distinct. Over time we accumulate knowledge about the self from experiences with family, school, and culture. As our interactions become more complex, a belief system about the self emerges, and along with that an understanding of our more complex attributes. Self-esteem is our judgment of personal morality, and the satisfaction with our performance relative to ideal and ought selves. People who are low in self-esteem need constant approval and reaffirmation. High self-esteem is functional in setting goals and persisting in our goal directed behaviors. Those with low self-esteem are more pessimistic and do not believe they have self-efficacy.

The building blocks of the self point to five basic traits as being universal: namely conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. The research literature supports the heritability of personality traits. We use these traits in judging others and ourselves. Since the traits are understood everywhere they must a biological evolutionary basis growing out of needs to adapt and survive. The heritability of traits is supported by studies of fraternal and identical twins. Also, traits identified early in children, like shyness, tend to have lifelong consequences. Neuroticism is associated with subjective stress, and on the opposite side extraversion is associated with the presence of the neurotransmitter Dopamine. It is impossible to separate the self from biological inheritance. Recent research points to the complex interaction between genetic inheritance and specific environments in producing predictable behavior. Perhaps some traits like neuroticism were adaptable in early human history in the struggle for survival, but are non-adaptable now in our complex society.

Scientists and philosophers have long discussed the nature of the self. As science has progressed we understand more and more the so-called “easy” problem that links thought to brain function. The “hard” problem is trying to understand the “knower” the subjective experience that someone is in charge, an executive “I” or decider. Why does it feel like we have a conscious process, and how does that subjective experience emerge from neural computations in the brain? When scientists use MRI’s they can practically map thought processes in the brain, but there is no convincing evidence of an ethereal soul. Is the “knower” nothing but an illusion required by the information overload in the brain, and the need to evaluate stimuli? Can the knower be understood solely as brain activity? Certainly believing in a soul construct has not supported moral behavior as is evidenced by all human history. The hard problem remains and may never be solved. All we can say with certainty is that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

The development of the social self is produced by the consistent reactions of socialization agents. These reactions influence the development of self-knowledge and self-esteem. It is the consistent treatment by early socialization agents such as family that is the basis of what we believe about ourselves and that knowledge guides our behavior for the rest of our lives. The family is central in the creation of the possible self, the self of the future. Other factors that influence the development of self-knowledge and self-esteem are birth order and group memberships. Birth order has an effect as children learn to occupy various niches in the family that are functional and rewarding. Group memberships are also a key to understanding the self because groups socialize values that have motivational significance. Research has shown that even nonsensical groups may have profound effects on decisions and history shows that group categorization itself is responsible for much of the mayhem in the world. Minorities for example have to deal with special challenges as they cope with mainstream cultures. Although in general, strong ethnic identity combined with positive attitudes toward the larger society is associated with high self-esteem.

Culture is a major source of the self-concept. The main differences discussed in this chapter and in what follows are the reliable differences found between interdependent and independent societies introduced in chapter 1. For the interdependent societies of Asia and elsewhere, the social context of family and society matters greatly in the development of the self-concept. The independent societies of North American and Europe have more independent self-construal where the self is seen as autonomous, distinct, and separate from others. Whether we achieve for personal reasons or for group goals is to some extent determined by culture. One’s culture might also affect the choice of career; and whether we seek to enhance the self or society. In independent societies self-esteem is ego based, whereas in interdependent cultures it is more related to family and social approval. As always we must remember that cultural differences are abstractions, that people differ within cultural models, and that the world is becoming more convergent.

Gender plays, along with family, groups and culture, a vital role in development of the self-concept. All cultures treat males and females differentially with lifelong consequences. Women become more interdependent and connected to intimate relationships. Men are more affected by larger social groupings. Socialization through the efforts of families, society, and educational processes produce these predictable differences. Gender differences probably evolved early in human history in response to survival demands that required role specialization. A few theories have been discussed in this chapter.

Social comparison theory asserts that we learn about ourselves by comparing our behavior to that of others. We enhance ourselves when we compare downward, and inspire ourselves for achievement when comparing ourselves to high achieving models. At times, e.g. when facing a crisis or in response to uncertainty, we compare in order to bond with other people.

Self-perception theory suggests that we derive the meaning of emotions from self-observation of our own behavior. At times we meet with novel situations or the unfamiliar and do not know what we are supposed to feel. In these cases our objective behavior becomes the guide for understanding our emotions. We attribute meaning by ascribing the cause for our feelings to either the situation or to personal volition. Self-perception theory has been applied to education, and supports the importance of intrinsic motivation in producing lasting learning. Schacter used self-perception theory in his two-factor model of emotion. He states that people note their internal physiological reactions to stimuli and then look in the environment for a plausible cause to explain these feelings. This has been demonstrated in research that showed that emotional labels may be arbitrary and can be manipulated For example, happiness or anger can be attributed from the same physiological reactions depending on environmental factors. Misattribution of arousal is possible as more than one source can explain what we feel. Research shows that misattribution for arousal can also easily be manipulated. In relation to this cognitive appraisal theories point out that sometimes we experience emotions after we think about and understand the situation. The meaning of the situation, the good or bad it implies for our well-being brings on emotions after we have thought about these consequences.

We can also learn about the self-concept by introspection although introspection is not reliable. Most people spend little time thinking about themselves because it is, at times painful, especially if we are aware of shortcomings in meeting ideal or ought selves. We seek escape in drugs, excessive television viewing, or dogmatic religion that tells us all we need to know. Also, introspection may not tell us the real reasons for our feelings as we may rely on causal theories derived from society that offer plausible but false causes.

A major organizational function of the self is the constricting and narrowing of our perceptions. Research shows that the self affects memory, as recall of material is more efficient if related to self-relevant schemas. Self-schemas refer to the basic dimensions we employ in cognizing about the self, it is our organized thinking about important self-relevant dimensions. Self-schemas are readily available in memory, and are a fundamental organizing tool. We develop self-schemas because we cannot attend to everything, and therefore focus selectively on information considered most relevant. At the same time self-schemas restrict information by removing from awareness information that is inconsistent from that which we already believe. Self-schemas are stable over time, precisely because we act consistently and selectively to new information.

A major function of self-schemas is self-regulation. We think about the future and envision a possible self, what we can become, and this motivates our planning and behavior. The self serves regulatory functions in determining plans and choices for creating the future that we expect and want. It is important to keep in mind that energy for self-regulation is finite. This fact makes us vulnerable when trying to stay on diets or refrain from taking up bad habits once discarded. The stable self provides a sense of continuity throughout the lifespan. At times we are faced with novel situations like soldiers in wartime, and develop working temporary selves to cope with demands. Sadly, these temporary working self-concepts can become part of the permanent self when the behavior varies widely from the stable self, and the situation is traumatic and powerful in its effects.

The self has motivational properties. Our current behavior is determined by our plans for the future and our possible selves. Possible selves also include religious and cultural standards, and are often associated with feelings of guilt and shame. The ideal self refers to our aspirations in life, whereas our ought self describes our obligations and duties. Discrepancies between ideal and ought and what is real causes anxiety, and produces for some the motivation necessary to change. Most alcoholics feel the discrepancy eventually, and many seek help.

In judging others we use our self-image bias. Whether we accept others is related to how similar others are to ourselves. Culture plays here a role as well. For example in the West others are judged according to criteria of the independent self where the ideal self plays a primary role. In interdependent cultures others become standards for judgment, and the ought self including obligations and duties is the primary evaluative tool.

We are motivated by consistent and accurate self-conceptions. Especially feedback that is consistent with our self-conceptions is motivating. We seek primarily self-affirmation in our interactions with others and this in fact influences our choice of friends. We select those friends who will confirm our self-concepts. This selection is to some degree modified by self-esteem: Persons with high self-esteem are more likely to be receptive to both negative and positive self-confirming information than persons with low self-esteem. An accurate self-concept is adaptive since plans and success in the future depend on accurate self-assessments.

Most people are motivated to enhance a sense of self-worth. There are components of self-esteem that remain consistent as a personality trait throughout life. Momentary changes in self-esteem, however, may occur from developmental issues and as a consequence of significant events. A central issue in the need for self-esteem is the desire to be accepted and included. Isolation is therefore extremely painful, as penologists know. This preoccupation with approval derives from obvious social and evolutionary advantages. Our self-esteem may rise or fall with experience in domains key to the self. In turn culture determines to some extent what areas are considered salient domains. Research shows that self-esteem is more functional if based on more than one or a few domains. With many domains we can control the inevitable setbacks that life hands us.

Preoccupation with self-esteem is primarily a Western phenomenon. It is derived from the cultural focus on independence and personal distinctions. That Western respondents self-report higher levels of self-esteem, may be attributed to the greater modesty of interdependent peoples. Being rewarded or praised for achievement is more common in the West, whereas in interdependent cultures people are more motivated by common goals and self-improvement. Cultural differences in self-esteem are abstractions as again there are differences within cultures, and globalization is encouraging convergence in values.

False self-esteem is aggrandizement based on group memberships where the group operates by the scapegoating and demonization of outsiders. Gang violence is caused by false aggrandizement as compensation for all that is missing in the gang member’s life. Gang member’s display elevated self-esteem not justified by accomplishments or good works. Their fundamental insecurity is revealed by their sensitivity to perceived insults. Psychopaths posses grandiose conceptions of self-worth, but no genuine self-esteem.

The preoccupation with enhancement influences the way in which we associate with others. It leads to comparison between the self and the other for advantages looking downward or enjoying the reflected glory of the achievements of those with whom we associate. Friendships are based on the need for enhancement. When we select our friends we ensure that we can compare downward in most salient domains. In Western cultures self-enhancement is of overriding importance, especially when we are threatened by failure. In general most people believe that their positive traits are more important than their negative attributes. Self-enhancement leads, in fact, to better mental health, and better physiological and endocrine functions.

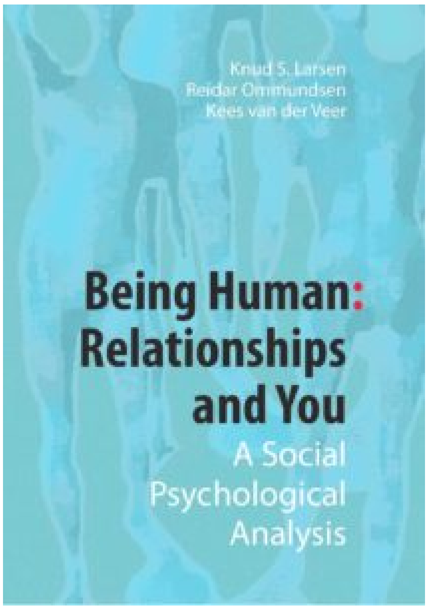
When the self-concept is threatened we shore up self-worth by reaffirming in other unrelated attributes of the self. For example, there is no greater threat than mortality. We control this essential threat through self-esteem, we assert that our lives are worthwhile and we rely on a worldview that makes life meaningful. When people are threatened by mortality they are easily manipulated and provoked to aggression. Threat to world-views or to conventional society undermines the cultural meanings that controls death anxiety.

In a complex world how do we find a path to well-being? In Western societies people have been convinced that consumption is the road to follow. However, well-being is related to the quality of life, to the journey of life, and to realistic expectations. Furthermore, our personality also matters. For instance, for some people a glass is half empty, for others the glass is half full and next to a plentiful bottle. It is important to pursue self-relevant goals that reflect that which we value in life. Regardless of cultural differences we all have basic human needs for autonomy, for competence to deal with challenges, and for a supportive social network.

Research shows that a complexity of attributes and self-efficacy is necessary for well-being. Respondents who possess more complex self-concepts are not overcome when facing a setback in a singular dimension. Self-efficacy is the feeling of "can do", that we have the necessary competence to succeed. Self-efficacy grows out of early experiences with parents and educators. Our early success reduces experienced stress in life. Positive illusions refer to exaggerated optimism and sense of control in life. The well-adjusted often display positive illusions that can enhance, encourage, and motivate behavior. Those with positive illusions are happier and have better social relationships than the depressed that have more realistic conceptions. People in the West are especially likely to display unrealistic optimism about the future. The downside of positive illusions is that at times we must face unpleasant reality. Positive illusions are more likely endorsed in Western societies. Well-being in interdependent cultures is more related to fulfillment of roles and social expectations.

Impression management suggests that people are actors on the stage of life. Most people mold their behavior according to situational demands, we are chameleons according to need. Psychopaths are especially skilled at impression management. Since we all want to be accepted we work hard to convince others that our self-presentation is true. We encourage others to believe in our public face. Ingratiation is a form of impression management where we try to make ourselves more likeable to the powerful through flattery. Self-handicapping promotes face saving by engaging in self-defeating behaviors prior to performance. Sometimes people take foolish chances with health in order to preserve their face and image. Self-promotion is a more direct path of impression management. We seek to impress others of our competence, and our associations with others of status and power. It is primarily the publicly self-conscious who engage in impression management. People with private self-consciousness are concerned with independent thoughts and feelings. The social self emerges from social interaction in all cultures. The self-concept is therefore a consequence of cultural values. Saving face is of particular importance to Asian cultures. Central to these societies is the concern about roles and expectations, whereas people in the West are more concerned about individual enhancement.

Being Human. Chapter 3: Attraction And Relationships: The Journey From Initial Attachments To Romantic Love



Many years ago two boys were walking home from school. They were seven years old, lived in the same neighborhood, but went to different grade schools. Although living close to each other they had not met before running into each other on this day on the road leading up the hill to their neighborhood. Both seemed quite determined to assert themselves that day, and soon they began pushing each other that gradually turned to wrestling, and attempts to dominate. After what seemed hours, the two little boys were still rolling down the surrounding hills as the sun was going down. Neither succeeded in achieving victory that day. In fact, they never again exchanged blows but became the best of friends. Today it is more than 50 years later, and their friendship has endured time and distance. Friendship is like a rusty coin; all you need to do is polish it at times!

In this essay we shall examine the research on attachment, attraction and relationships. The intrinsic interest in these fields by most people is shared by social psychologists, and attachment, attraction, and love relationships constitute one of the most prolific areas of investigation in social psychology. The early attachment theory advanced by Bowlby (1982) emphasized the importance of the field when he suggested that our attachments to parents to a large extent shape all succeeding relationships in the future. Other research focus on exchange and communal relationships and point to the different ways we have of relating to each other. The importance of relationships cannot be overemphasized since we as humans have a fundamental need to belong. Relationships also contribute to the social self as discussed in the book, and effects social cognition discussed in the same (see: at the end of this article). The variables that determine attraction may be understood theoretically as functions of a reward perspective.

The importance of relationships is demonstrated by findings that show that among all age groups relationships are considered essential to happiness (Berscheid, 1985; Berscheid & Reis, 1998). The absence of close relationships makes the individual feel worthless, powerless, and alienated (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Stroebe & Stroebe, 1996). Our very humanity is defined by our relationships (Bersheid & Regan, 2005).

1. Attachment: The start to relationships

This chapter is about the development of attachment, intimate relationships between adults, and the road leading toward love relationships. No greater love has a person than giving his life for another. This idea from the Bible brings to mind the passion of deep commitment and the willingness to sacrifice, even in the ultimate sense. This willingness to sacrifice is one manifestation of love, but as we all know there is much more to relationships and love.

The research described in the following pages concerns early attachment, and attraction and love between adults. These relationships may be institutionalized by marriage, or (registered) partnership, or take some other form (living-apart-together) in relationships. Since the vast majority of romantic relationships exist between heterosexual partners we describe the journey from attraction to romantic relationship from this perspective. There is little research so there is no way to know, however, there is no convincing reason to assume that this journey is completely different for homosexuals.

Most people will experience the delirious feelings of infatuation and love sometime in their lives. What is love? How can we achieve love? And how can we build these feelings into lasting relationships? Are there ways we can improve our chances for satisfying long-lasting and happy relationships? This chapter will show that there are behaviors to avoid, but that we can also contribute much to lasting attachments. Long-lasting romance depends on positive illusions and bringing novelty and renewal to our intimate relationships.

We live in a changing world. Although in many parts of the world couples are still united through arranged marriages, more and more modern communications are changing the ways people relate, for example learning about other culture to value freedom or the individual right to choose one’s spouse. Computers provide platforms from which to initiate relationships, and opportunities to screen for important characteristics prior to any encounter. Does that take away something of the mystery of liking and loving relationships? Some do feel that how we encounter and meet people should remain in the realm of the mysterious.

However, as we shall see in this chapter, learning to like and commit to one another follows predictable patterns. The fact that divorce rates increase in the western world, suggests that we could all benefit from a greater understanding of how relationships develop, and how to make them enduring and satisfying. To give up one's life for another is a noble commitment, but to live one's life for the beloved is a different, but equally high calling. How do we move from the initial encounter of liking to romance and love and lasting commitment? We shall see that liking and love are universal behaviors, although cultures affect how they are expressed.

In this chapter we shall discuss the research from initial attachments to long lasting relationships. Is there a basic need to belong? Does evolutionary thinking contribute to our understanding of the universality of attachment? There is evidence, as we shall see, that we all need to be connected to others, to experience a network of varying relationships. These needs are universal, present in all cultures and societies. Our needs to belong motivate our unconscious and conscious thoughts, and our behavior in the search for satisfying relationships. Without such relationships we suffer the pangs of loneliness with negative physical and psychological consequences.

1.1 An evolutionary approach to attachment

Many textbooks in psychology refer to feral children as evidence that negative consequences occur when a child grows up without normal human attachments. The child Victor was found in 1800 in the French village of Saint-Sernin. He was believed to have grown up in the forests without human contact, and proved devoid of any recognizable human characteristics. Initially he refused to wear clothes, understood no language, and never showed human emotion. This "wild boy of Aveyron" was taken into the care of Jean Itard, who devoted considerable energy to teach Victor language and human interaction. He did eventually learn some words, but never developed normal human interaction or relationships (Itard, 1801; 1962). Do feral children demonstrate the essence of human nature in the absence of relationships? We can see from the story of Victor, and that of other feral children, that what we describe as human is forged in our relationships with others. Without these interactions there is little discernable human in our behavior. Without relationships provided by parents, family, and society, we are without language with which to communicate, and without civilization to teach appropriate norms for behavior, and we have no "human nature". We are human because of our relationships.

1.2 Early attachment forms the basis for our adult relationships

What are some of the deciding factors that enable us to establish interpersonal relationships? Interpersonal relationships are essential to human satisfaction and happiness, and refer to the bonds of friendship and love that hold together two or more people over time. Interdependence is manifested by how individuals spend significant time thinking about each other, and engage in common activities, and have shared histories and memories. Although central to our understanding of what it means to be human, social psychology has a short history of studying relationships (Hartup & Stevens, 1997). Since we cannot experiment with relationships among humans, research takes a different form. In research on relationships we face different problems with methodology than encountered elsewhere in experimental social psychology (Karney & Bradbury, 1997). Since research may affect self-awareness and the relationship ethical concerns must dictate sensitivity in the questions asked allowing us to use primarily the interview and survey methods.

Harlow (1959) performed a famous experiment with baby rhesus monkeys that supported the conclusions drawn from the studies of feral children: social isolation is traumatic and prevents normal development. In this classic study baby monkeys were raised without any contact with a mother or other monkeys. They were provided two "mother substitutes"; one was a wire feeder, and the other feeding substitute was softer and covered with terry cloth. The importance of contact was shown by the baby monkeys clinging to the terry cloth "mother", and when frightened rushing to this substitute for comfort. Like the feral children these monkeys were abnormal when they approached adolescence or adulthood. They displayed high anxiety, could not playfully interact with peers, and failed to engage in normal sexual behavior. It would appear that social interaction, particularly with parent figures, is essential for normal functioning in adulthood. What we describe as human nature would evaporate in the absence of relationships as we are socialized by our interactions. The universality of the desire to belong would suggest a biological basis similar to other biological needs.

Some will suggest that the need to belong is indeed part of our evolutionary heritage (Bercheid & Regan, 2005). No other species display a longer dependency period than humans, and we need nurturing relationships to survive. Parents who in the past failed to display essential nurturing behavior did not produce offspring that survived. We are all descendants of relationships that took parenting very serious. It is possible to perceive bonding from the very beginning of life. Initially only the mother establishes relationships by gazing at the infant, who in turn responds by cooing and smiling. That is the beginning of all subsequent bonding in the child's life. Later as the child grows, other bonds are established with the father and other family members. Throughout life a normal human being will seek out relationships responding to a biological need for companionship.

Baumeister & Leary (1995) proposed five criteria to demonstrate the fundamental biological nature of the need to belong. First, since relationships make a direct contribution to survival, an evolutionary basis is supported (Simpson & Kenrick, 1998). Evolutionary causality would require us to accept that even romantic bonds with all the giddiness and mystery are primarily vehicles that create conditions for reproduction and survival of the infants (Ellis & Malamuth, 2000; Hrdy, 1999). Without that special attachment between mother and infant the child would be unable to survive or achieve independence (Buss, 1994).

A second criterion for the evolutionary basis of relationships is the universality of the mother-child and romantic lover interdependence. As we shall see, such relationships are found in all cultures expressed with some variations. Thirdly, if relationships are a product of evolution, it should have a profound effect on social cognition. There is much support that our relationships to a significant degree define who we are, our memories, and the attributions we make in varying situations (Karney & Coombs, 2000; Reis & Downey, 1999). Fourthly, if need to belong is similar to other biological drives the desire for relationships should be satiable. When deprived we should manifest searching behavior similar to that which occurs for food or water when deprived of these essentials. Once our relationships needs are satisfied, we are no longer motivated to establish new connections (Wheeler & Nezlek, 1977), but if deprived we will seek substitutions for even close family relationships (Burkhart, 1973). Finally, according to Baumeister and Leary, if we are deprived chronically the consequences are devastating. There is a great deal of evidence that relationships are fundamental to our sense of physical and psychological well-being, and to how happy or satisfied we are (Myers, 2000b).

For those deprived, the evidence is uncontroversial. Divorced people have higher mortality rates (Lynch, 1979), whereas social integration is associated with lower death rates (Berkman, 1995). Suicide rates are higher for the divorced (Rothberg & Jones, 1987), whereas breast cancer victims are more likely to survive with support groups (Spiegel, Bloom, Kraemer, & Gottheil, 1989). Other research has shown that social support strengthens our immune and cardiovascular systems (Oxman & Hull, 1997). The literature is very clear on this. With social support we do better against all that life throws against us, without relationships we are likely to lead unhappy lives and die prematurely.

1.3 Biology versus culture

There is no more controversial issue than deciding in favor of an evolutionary or a cultural explanation of attraction. Evidence will show that women in all cultures tend to prefer partners who possess material resources, whereas men prefer youth and beauty. However, in the human species the male is also physically larger, stronger, and more dominant. This has led to male control over material resources. Since women are more vulnerable, they are naturally more concerned with meeting these material needs. (Eagly & Wood, 1999; Wood & Eagly, 2002). The cross-cultural consistency in gender preference may simply reflect size differences and the gender based control of economic resources.

The evolutionary perspective asserts that gender based preferences have reproductive reasons. Symmetrical men are thought attractive because they signal good reproductive health. Some intriguing studies show that women who ovulate show a preference for the smell derived from "symmetric" men (Gangestad & Thornhill, 1998; Thornstead & Gangestad, 1999). Women in the ovulatory phase also prefer men who have confident and assertive self presentations (Gangestad, Simpson, Cousins, Carvar-Apgar, & Christensen, 2004). There is no definitive solution to the biology versus culture argument. Perhaps what matters is, regardless of the origin, these gender differences exist and persist.

1.4 The experience of loneliness

The psychological distress we feel when deprived of social relationships is loneliness (Perlman & Peplau, 1998). For each individual there exists an optimal number of relationships depending on age, and perhaps other factors. We join clubs, political organizations, special interest groups, and religious organizations in an effort to remove deficit in social relationships. We can have many acquaintances, but still feel lonely. Some of us feel lonely being in a crowd where social relations are plentiful, but intimacy is absent. Clearly, the answer to loneliness is not just the quantity of relationships, but whether the connections satisfy emotional needs. Some people have few relationships, and enjoy the experience of being alone. If we find in ourselves good company, our needs for others are diminished. Those who have rich emotional lives are less dependent on others for satisfaction of emotional needs.

However, many people feel the wrenching experience of loneliness. In our society it is very prevalent (Perlman & Peplau, 1998) with 25 percent reporting feeling very lonely and alienated. Some causes of loneliness are situational due to common life changes in our mobile societies. We move often, and when we do we lose some of our relationships. For example, new opportunities for work require our presence in another part of the country or abroad, and young students attend universities away from family and friends. In these and in many other cases people lose their known social network and support groups. On some occasions we lose relationships permanently due to the death of loved ones, and the resulting grief can produce feelings of prolonged loneliness.

Other people suffer from chronic loneliness. These are people who describe themselves as "always lonely", with continuous feelings of sadness and loss. Chronically lonely people are often in poor health, and their lives are associated with many issues of social maladjustment including alcohol abuse and depression. Loneliness is a form of stress and is associated with increased health problems resulting in death (Hawkley, Burleson, Berntson, & Cacioppo, 2003).

Weiss (1973) described two forms of loneliness. Social loneliness is produced by the absence of an adequate social network of friends. The answer to that kind of loneliness is establishing new contacts, perhaps by involvement in the community. Emotional loneliness, on the other hand is the deprivation felt from the absence of intimacy in our lives. We all need at least one significant other with whom we can share intimate thoughts and feelings, whether in the form of a friend or spouse. An emotionally lonely person may be well connected, but still feel the gnawing disquiet even in the midst of a crowd.

As we noted in the introduction, our childhood experiences predispose us toward a variety of relationship problems or enjoyments of life. Children of the divorced are at risk for loneliness, and may develop shyness and lower self-esteem (Brehm, Miller, Perlman, & Campbell, 2002). On the other hand, being in a satisfying relationship is a primary guard against feelings of loneliness, this is especially true for those who commit themselves to lifelong relationships (e.g. marriage) (Pinquart, 2003).

Demographic variables also have an effect on loneliness. Those who are poor struggle more with all forms of insecurity, and have less possibilities for participating in social relationships. For example due to lack of money poor people often cannot participate in social activities. Age is also a factor. Most may think that old age is a time of loneliness as people lose relationships to death or other causes. Some research (Perlman, 1990) however, shows that teenagers and young adults suffer most from isolation. Youth is a time when biology is insistent on connecting with others, particularly with a member of the opposite sex, and the absence of intimate relationships is felt most keenly. Some young people feel not only lonely, but rejected and ostracized. When that occurs we see the rejection play out in severe anti-social behavior as in the case of the school shootings of recent years (Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Stucke, 2001).

Interacting with people affects our emotional lives. We feel better being around others, particularly in close or romantic relationships (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003; Delespaul, Reis, & DeVries, 1996). Unhappiness in lonely people, however, may not be due to the absence of people alone. Unhappy friends are not rewarding to be around, and they might be lonely because they are unhappy, rather than unhappy because they are lonely (Gotlib, 1992).

Our need to belong is manifest in all cultures and societies. It is obviously functional to the infant who needs protection. However, adults also could not function in society without supportive relationships. These needs to belong are universal, and if not satisfied produce many negative results. Further, our relationships help form our self-concept (chapter 2) and our most significant behaviors. Our relationships largely determine how we think about the world, and our emotional well-being.

1.5 The beginnings of attachment

Infants demonstrate stubborn attachments to their primary caregiver. This is sometimes manifested by total devotion to the mother, gazing and smiling when in contact, crying when she leaves the room. As the child gets a little older the pattern may continue, initially having nothing to do with the rest of the family. The attachments of the child may gradually change and she or he becomes fond of the father, grandmother and other relatives, proceeding normally from long attachment to the mother, to establishing new relationships with other people in her or his life. Attachment refers to the positive emotions expressed in the presence of the caregiver, the feeling of security in the child, and the desire to be with the caregiver, initially exclusively, but later with other significant others (Bowlby, 1988; Cassidy & Shaver, 1999).

The personal security and emotional warmth offered to the child is different for each caregiver. Therefore infants develop different attachment styles that in turn have profound effect on adult relationships. Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall (1978) proposed three infant attachment styles. *The secure attachment* occurs when the caregiver is available, and the infant feels secure, and when the child's emotional needs are met. *The avoidant attachment* occurs when the caregiver is detached, unresponsive to the infant, and when in some cases the infant is rejected. This type of attachment leads to premature detachment and self-reliance. When the parent figure is at times available, but at other times not, and therefore is inconsistent in meeting the emotional needs of the child, the result is *an anxious-ambivalent attachment* style. This type of infant may be anxious and often feel threatened.

Essentially the three attachment styles develop in response to the caregiver's emotional behavior; i.e., how consistent the emotional needs are met, and how secure the child feels as a consequence. From the perspective of evolutionary theory, attachment has obvious survival value for the infant. If mothers did not find the baby's cooing and smile endearing, and if the infant did not find her presence so reassuring, the lack of attachment could be disastrous for the infant. Infants and small children cannot survive without parental attention, so both the caregiver's behavior and infant's responses are very functional to the survival of the human species.

1.6 Attachment styles of adults

How comfortable are we with our relationships, and to what degree can we form secure and intimate relations with family, friends, and lovers? Hazan & Shaver (1987) found that adults continue with the same attachment styles adopted as infants. Whether an adult is secure in relationships, and can foster shared intimacy, depends on the three attachment styles described above. Psychoanalysis asserted that our childhood experiences have profound effects on adult behavior. The attachment theorist likewise believes that the relationship styles developed as infants are stable across a person's lifetime. Infant attachment styles determine whom we associate with as adults and the quality of our relationships. Some longitudinal studies have in fact demonstrated attachment styles developed early in life determine how we later relate to our love partners, our friends, and eventually our own children (Fraley & Spieker, 2003; Kirkpatrick & Hazan, 1994). Other researchers however, have found changes between infant and adult attachment styles (Baldwin & Fehr, 1995). The infant's relationship with the primary caregiver is critical to the success of adult relationships. However, there is some hope that we can change from infant maladaptive styles to more functional adult behaviors and relationship satisfaction.

Life events may also influence our ability to form secure relationships. Traumatic events that separate us from beloved family members through death or divorce, affect our ability to develop intimate relations. So does childhood abuse, or family instability (Brennan & Shaver, 1993; Klohnen & Bera, 1998). Within intimate relationships the type of attachment has profound effects (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Fraley & Shaver, 1996). How we say goodbye, for example, at train stations and airports is reflective of our attachment styles. Avoidant romantic partners spent less time giving embraces, whereas those who were anxious expressed sadness and fear when separating. How we express attachment may vary with culture. Being reserved is not universally diagnostic of having an avoidant attachment style.

1.7 Secure attachment styles bring many benefits
Secure individuals bring out the best in others. Even when significant others display negative behaviors such as unjustified criticisms, the secure person will see that behavior in a positive light (Collins, 1996). A secure and positive outlook brings its own rewards. These include, not surprisingly, more relationship satisfaction. Secure partners are less likely to break up the relationship, and more likely to stay married, they experience fewer marital tensions, and generally fewer general negative outcomes (Shaver & Brennan, 1992; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). On the other hand, anxious people are more likely to perceive threat. They view life events in pessimistic ways leading to depression, substance abuse, and eating disorders. Our early bonds with caregivers matter a great deal as we move on in life. These attachment styles have significant effects on our current relationships, and our own sense of well-being. Secure life styles based on a good start in life produce healthier relationships, and good personal health.

2. Culture and socialization produce different relationships
Fiske (1991; 1992) proposed a theory of relationships that suggest that we behave in four distinct ways in defining who we are, how we distribute resources, and how we make moral judgments. A *communal relationship* put the interest of the group ahead of that of the individual. Types of groups in this category include families, or close social allies. In families what we contribute depends on what we

can offer, and what is right to receive depends on the needs of the individual informed by benevolence and caring. In a family, children are different and require different resources. One child may be intellectually gifted, and parental care may be shown by support for education. Disproportionate support for one child may result in fewer resources for another child. In communal groups or families, resource distribution is decided by the needs of each member, and desire to help all.

In the *authority ranking groups* the status and ranking hierarchy is what matters. Members of these groups are aware of the status differences, and roles tend to be clearly specified. Military organizations are examples, but so are modern capitalist organizations that depend on a top down authoritarian structure. Tribal organizations are usually also authoritarian, and the chief determines who does what, and in what way performance is rewarded or punished.

The third type of relationship is *equality matching*. These relationships are based on equality in resources and preferred outcomes. Many friendships and marriages are governed by some norm of equality. Members should have on the average the same rights, constraints or freedoms. The essential question asked in response to any requests or demands is: is it fair? Is it also applicable to the capitalist market system based on the market pricing relationships. Fourth, relationships emerging from the market economy are governed in principle by *equity*, by what is considered fair. Salaries should be based on merit and equity, where the compensation received is proportional to the quality and effort made by the individual (for example if you cannot pay for medical help, then you get none). While Fiske claims these four types are universal, some relationships are emphasized in a particular culture. Capitalist societies rely on market pricing relationships, and increasingly we are seeing similar relationships in current and formerly socialist countries.

2.1 The child in the relationship

Many social psychologists find attachment theory useful in understanding the relationships between adults both platonic and romantic (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). They are interested in what ways adult love relationships are similar to the attachment patterns of infants. It seems that the intense fascination with the love object, parent or lover, is similar. The adult lover may gaze with intense fascination into the eyes of the beloved, much as the infant gazes into the eyes of the mother. Lovers feel distress at separation, as do infants when the mother leaves the room. In both situations strong efforts are made to be together, spend time together and avoid separation.

Adult love relationships also fall into the three attachment patterns described for children. One study showed that the majority of US citizens (59 %) are securely attached, whereas 25 percent are avoidant, and 11 percent are anxious-ambivalent (Mickelson, Kessler, & Shaver, 1997). There are differences as well, as adult relationships involve reciprocal care, and in some cases sexual attraction. Still, the mother would not gaze at the infant unless she found it very rewarding, and there is some reciprocal behavior there. The mother loves her child and is rewarded by adorable gazing and smiles of the infant.

Some psychologists feel that this early model of love becomes a working framework for later relationships. The infant who has secure attachments with parents comes to believe that similar relationships can be established as an adult, that people are good and can be trusted. On the other hand the anxious-ambivalent attachment may produce fear, rejection of intimacy, and distrust in the relationship in the adult. The burden of the generations occurs when a parent passes on to the next generation the attachment style he developed as an infant. The rejection a mother experienced as an infant may become the working model for her child rearing when she is a parent.

There is hope for victims of dysfunctional attachment styles. Sometimes an adult love relationship is so powerful that it can overcome any negative experiences from childhood. On the whole however, absent any major event affecting attachment, there is great stability in attachment styles across the life span (Fraley, 2002; Collins & Feeney, 2004). Secure adults are comfortable with intimacy and feel worthy of receiving affection from another person. As a consequence, they also perceive happiness and joy in their love relationships built on self-disclosure and shared activities. It should come as no surprise that secure individuals also have positive perceptions of parents as loving and fair. Later in life secure people develop more satisfying relationships. Secure people experience more satisfying intimacy and enjoyment, and feel positive emotions in their relationships (Tidwell, Reis, & Shaver, 1996). When life becomes stressful, secure individuals provide more mutual support, and are more effective and responsive to the partners needs (Feeney & Collins, 2001; Feeney & Hohaus, 2001). Avoidant persons, on the other hand, are often uncomfortable in getting intimate, and never develop full trust in the love partner. They spend much time denying love needs, do not self disclose, and place more importance on being independent and self-reliant. The anxious- ambivalent person wants to become intimate, but worry that the other person does not feel the same. Anxious adults tend to be obsessed with the object of love, experience emotional highs and lows, feel intense sexual attraction, and jealousy. They often feel unappreciated by their partners, and view their parents as being unhappy.

2.2 The transfer effect in our relationships

The transfer effect is well known in clinical psychology. In the effort to help the patient the therapist allows the patient to transfer feelings from some other significant other to the therapist. Temporarily the therapist becomes the father figure, or some other significant person in the therapeutic relationship. We have all met people who remind us of others. The authors have all had the experience of meeting someone who was certain to have met one of us before, or believed we were closely related to someone they knew. Does the professor of this class remind you of a favored uncle or aunt? Chances are that you will transfer positive feelings toward the professor, and with such an auspicious beginning the outcome may be very good for your study. The relational self-theory is based on the idea that our prior relationships determine how we feel toward those who remind us of such significant others from our past.

Andersen & Chen (2002) developed the idea of relational self-theory to demonstrate how prior relationships affect our current cognitions and interactions with others. They hypothesized that when we encounter someone who reminds us of a significant other from the past we are likely to activate a relational self that determines our interactions with the new person. Meeting people who remind us of past significant others even has emotional consequences. In one study the researchers assessed the participant's emotional expressions after being exposed to information that resembled a positive or negative significant other from the past (Andersen, Reznik, & Manzella, 1996). The participants expressed more positive emotion as judged by facial expressions after being exposed to information about a past positive significant other, and more negative facial expressions after exposure to the information of a negative person.

Our past relationships also determine our current interactions. When we interact with someone who reminds us of someone else it affects our self-concept and behavior (Hinkley & Andersen, 1996). Encountering such a person alters how we think of ourselves, and the past relationship may affect our behavior at the automatic level (Andersen, Reznik, & Manzella, 1996). This finding helps explain our preference for some individuals, and our rejection of others. Positive emotions result from being in the presence of people who remind us of previous positive relations. However, we should remind ourselves that these gut feelings are not the consequence of actual behavior or interactions. Any immediate dislike may have more to do with unpleasant relations of the past, than the person with whom you are currently interacting.

2.3 Social cognition and previous relationships

We construe the world through processes of social cognition. Previous relationships affect how we come about this construction of the world. This is logical when we realize that relationships form the basis of many of our memories. In one study, for instance, participants were better able to remember information based on relationships than other sources of information (Sedikides, Olsen, & Reis, 1993).

We tend to be optimistic about self and close friends believing that the outcomes of life will be positive for ourselves and those with whom we relate (Perlof & Fetzer, 1986), and we include close others in our attributional biases assessing more positive traits and behaviors to partners in close relationships. Success for self and friends is attributed to dispositional causes, while failures are attributed to the situational environment (Fincham & Bradbury, 1993). Close others become in a very real sense a part of the self-concept (Aron & Aron, 1997; Aron & Fraley, 1999). A relationship helps to expand the self-concept by utilizing the resources and characteristics of the other person. These characteristics then become part of the self-concept. This became very visible to us when a close follower of a prominent leader we knew took on characteristics of the admired leader, even to the point of mimicking his speech patterns. Later this same individual married the former wife of the leader, and served as the director of the leader's institute. Relationships are functional because of the self-concept expansion (Wegner, Erber, & Raymond, 1991). So-called transactive memory is demonstrated when partners know each other so well, that they can complete stories told by the other partner, and remember more information than two randomly paired people. Partners also collaborate in remembering facts. In driving to locations one partner may have good understanding of direction and long distance goals, and the other may remember specific street locations. Collaborative memory is based on such close relationships. Social cognition is central to an understanding of social psychology and will be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

3. Liking someone: the start of relationships

Why do we like some people and not others? Our past relationships with parents and close significant others have profound effects on attachment and liking, but that only partly answers the question of attraction. Another answer to what motivates people to embark on a relationship is its contribution to survival and success. However, the average person probably does not evaluate attraction to others on such a calculating basis. That is to say, when it comes to understanding deeper levels of motivation, we like those who are associated with rewarding events and whose behavior is intrinsically rewarding. We dislike those whose behaviors are a burden to us. At the level of motivation, conscious or unconscious, we seek to maximize our rewards and minimize costs. We seek relationships and continue in these if the rewards exceed the costs and therefore yield a profit (Kelley, 1979; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Rusbult, 1980).

3.1 Antecedents of attraction

Propinquity, similarity and physical attraction have been studied extensively by social psychologists. Many would consider these to be obvious variables in interpersonal attraction. Yet, in our culture we say, “beauty is only skin deep”, thereby denigrating the potential influence of physical attractiveness. As we shall see beauty is much more than skin deep, and along with similarity and propinquity have profound effects on whom we like, and on our relationships and social successes.

3.2 Propinquity: we like those living near us

Some of the very earliest research on attraction focused on the proximity of relationships (Festinger, Schachter, & Back, 1950). These early researchers performed a sociometric study in a housing complex for married students at MIT called Westgate West. The residents were asked to name their three closest friends. The majority of the respondents named people who lived in the same building, even though other housing units were nearby. Even within the building proximity was a striking factor, with 41 percent naming their next-door neighbors as best friends, 22 percent named those living two doors away, and only 10 percent pointed to those living at the end of hallways as close friends. The critical factor was the chance of coming in contact. Festinger et al. called this functional distance.

Although there are exceptions when we come to dislike people living next door the result of Festinger and colleagues is a very optimistic finding of social psychology. It suggests that most people have the capacity for friendships if only given the opportunity. This might even be extended to the most intimate relationships. Rather than waiting for the one and only knight on the white horse, or Cinderella, as romantic illusions would have you do, propinquity findings would suggest that there are millions of potential partners if only given the chance for encounters.

3.3 Mere exposure and familiarity

What is it about being given the chance to meet that leads to liking? Some research would indicate that proximity brings on a sense of familiarity that leads to liking (Borstein, 1989; Moreland & Zajonc, 1982; Zajonc, 1968). In the literature it is called the "mere exposure effect". The more we see people the more we like them, so proximity is about familiarity. Then why does familiarity produce liking? Is there some sense of security that comes from knowing that the familiar produces no harm? Is it an evolutionary mechanism where the familiar reduces threat? Do we have an innate fear of the unfamiliar? Are strangers a threat, because we do not know enough about them to predict their behavior? Perhaps it is. Perhaps we like those who are familiar, because we can predict their behavior and they are non-threatening. Milgram (1970) suggested that the fear of living in large cities among strangers was eased by seeing the same faces or "familiar strangers" – as they passed on their way to work.

A study by Moreland and Beach (1992) showed that the "mere exposure" produced liking. They had female confederates attend class sitting in the first row. There was otherwise no interaction between the female confederates, the instructor, or other students. Yet, when asked at the end of the term, the students rated these women highly for both liking and attractiveness. The literature supports the idea that familiarity promotes liking (Bornstein, 1989; Moreland & Zajonc, 1982). There is one caveat. If you find yourself instantly disliking what you consider an obnoxious person, exposure will intensify that effect (Swap, 1977).

Still a large amount of literature has been published supporting the "mere exposure" effect (Borstein, 1989; Zajonc, 1968). For example there are strong correlations between the frequency of exposure to a variety of objects and liking. Flowers that are mentioned more frequently in our literature are liked more than those mentioned less frequently, e.g., violets are liked more than hyacinths. People, at least in the US, also like pine trees more than birches, and like frequently mentioned cities more than those less well known. Zajonc argues that it is the mere exposure effect. However, on the other hand perhaps people write more about violets than hyacinths because they are liked more? How do we explain the preferences for different letters in the English alphabet that correspond to the frequency of appearance in writing (Alluisi & Adams, 1962)? We also tend to see letters in our own name more frequently, and have a greater liking for these letters (Hoorens, Nuttin, Herman, & Pavakanun, 1990).

In another study the more the participants were exposed to words they did not understand (Turkish words or Chinese pictographs) the more they liked them (Zajonc, 1968). Still, even "mere exposure" effects must have an explanation in term of rewards or the absence of threats that familiarity brings from repeated exposure. Zajonc (2001) recently explained the "mere exposure' effect as a form of classical conditioning. The stimulus is paired with something desirable, namely the absence of any aversive conditions. Therefore over time we learn to approach those objects considered "safe' and avoid those that are unfamiliar.

Computers are often used to make contact these days. Keeping in mind that it is the "functional distance" which is important, how does computer technology contribute to establishing new relationships? (Lea & Spears, 1995). All modern tools of communication can be used either for ethical or unethical purposes. There are predators online who lie or manipulate to take advantage of innocent young people. It is not safe. Online the individual has no way to confirm the truth of what another person is saying. Person-to-person we can check for all the nonverbal signals that we have learned from experience indicating truthfulness and trust. On the other hand, we do not have to worry much about rejection in Internet relationships, so perhaps we have less to loose and therefore can be more honest online? We can more quickly establish intimate relationships, but we may in the process idealize the other person. Only face-to-face can we decide what is real, and even then we may idealize, although as we will see this can be healthy for long term relationship survival.

Proximity effects means that we often marry people who live in the same neighborhoods, or work for the same firm (Burr, 1973; Clarke, 1952). The variable is optimistic about meeting someone because our world of potential relationships is unlimited. If our eyes are open we can find a mate somewhere close by, certainly within walking distance. Perhaps proximity also points to other forms of interpersonal similarity. Generally people living in the same neighborhoods often also come from similar social classes, ethnic groups, and in some parts of the world from the same religious groups. Proximity may therefore also be another way of pointing to similarity as a basis for liking. Familiarity provides the basis for sharing, and the gradual building of trust (Latané, Liu, Bonevento, & Zheng, 1995). The vast majority of those who have had memorable interactions leading to intimacy lived either at the same residence or within one mile from the trusted person.

The mere exposure effect can also be discerned in peoples' reactions to their own faces. Faces are not completely symmetrical as most of us display some asymmetry where the left side of the face does not perfectly match the right. Our face to a friend looks different from that we see our selves. The mirror image with which we are familiar is reverse from that which the world sees. If familiarity or mere exposure has an effect, our friends should like the face to which they are accustomed, whereas the individual should also like the mirror image with which he is familiar. Mita, Dermer, & Knight (1977) showed that the participants liked best the face with which they were most familiar.

3.4 Proximity and anticipating the cost of negative relationships

Proximity, moreover, reduces the cost of interaction. It takes a great deal of effort and expense to maintain long distance relationships. As a result of our work we have relationships in different parts of the world. As the years go by it is more and more difficult to continue with friendships that when we were young we thought would last forever. When you do not see someone in the course of daily activities it takes more effort, and may be costly in other ways. Long distance relationships take more dedication, time, and expense.

Proximity may exert pressures toward liking. It is difficult living or working with someone we dislike. That cognitive dissonance may cause us to remove stress by stronger efforts of liking the individual. Therefore, even the anticipation of interaction will increase liking, because we want to get along (Berscheid, Graziano, Monson, & Dermer, 1976). When we know we will interact with someone over time we are likely to focus on the positive qualities, as the alternative is too costly. Think of working with a boss you do not like, how costly that could be? Therefore we put our best foot forward when we meet people who may become part of our daily lives. Even the anticipation of interaction with others produce liking. Why else would people make extraordinary efforts to be nice at "get acquainted parties" at work, or in new neighborhoods? Putting your best foot forward is a strategy to produce reciprocal liking.

4. Similarity: rubbing our back

We like to be massaged, and therefore like those who validate and reinforce who we are and what we believe. The research literature supports this proposition (Bercheid & Reis, 1998; Ptacek & Dodge, 1995; Rosenblatt & Greenberg, 1988). It will come as no surprise that we tend to find our spouse among those who are similar to us on many different characteristics including race, religion, and political persuasion (Burgess & Wallin, 1953). Showing again the opportunistic nature of our most intimate relationships, similarity in social class and religion were the strongest predictors of liking.

Similarity of religion or social class may just be frequency or proximity factors, as the likelihood of exposure is greater for these categories. Similarity in physical attractiveness also plays a role and personality characteristics, although to a lesser extent (Buss, 1984). In a classic study, Newcomb (1961) showed that after a year of living together, student's liking of roommates was determined by how similar they were. In other studies where the participants thought they were rating another participant (in fact a bogus participant) either similar or dissimilar, the similar person was liked more (Byrne, 1961; Tan & Singh, 1995). The similarity effect holds true across a variety of relationships including friendship and marriage.

Similarity in education and even age seems to determine attraction (Kupersmidt, DeRosier, & Patterson, 1995). Not only are friends similar in social class and education, but also gender, academic achievement, and social behavior. A meta-analysis of 80 separate studies showed moderate relationships between similarity and attraction (AhYun, 2002). Today dating services are established on the principle that similarity is good and functional in relationships. A good match means finding someone who is similar. Dating services try to match after background checks and participant surveys of values, attitudes, and even physical appearance (Hill & Peplau, 1998). Those participants who were matched in attitudes toward gender roles and sexual behavior had the most lasting relationships, one year and even 15 years later.

4.1 How does similarity work?

As mentioned above similarity is a potent variable in friendship and mate selection. What are some of the mechanisms that produce this effect? Similarity gives a common platform for understanding, and that in turn promotes feelings of intimacy essential for trust, empathy and long lasting relationships (Aron, 1988; Kalick & Hamilton, 1988). If the issue is important only those with the same or similar values are acceptable. So attraction is selective and we rarely encounter those whose views are different. In relationships where the participant committed to someone with different values, or where the parties successfully hide their views, similarity could still be the outcome. Typically long time married couples have similar views because over time they persuade the partner to change his/her mind. Social influence may also change our views over time and produce more similarity.

We find pleasure in our relationships with similar others because they confirm our beliefs and the value of our person. When we meet with likeminded people, they validate our inner most values and expressed attitudes. The rest of the world may cast doubt on our beliefs, and may question who we are as persons, but the likeminded validate our ideologies and personal achievements. Even our physiological arousal corresponds to our liking someone (Clore & Gormly, 1974). Similarity allows for functional relationships and for more effective communication. When we are with those who are similar, communication is effortless, since we do not have to be on guard for disagreement or rejection.

4.2 A common social environment

Of course the social environment also has a selectivity bias. People meet likeminded people at Church, or those with similar occupational interests at work. In many cases the apparent similarity is caused by the selectivity of our social environment. A politically progressive person does not attend meetings of the Ku Klux Klan (a racist group) in order to find a soul mate. A longitudinal study of married couples showed that couples became more and more similar over time as they continued to persuade and experience a shared environment (Gruber-Baldini, Shai, & Willis, 1995).

We choose our friends from our social environment. In college we find our friends among those who are on the same track academically and can be of mutual aid (Kubitschek & Hallinan, 1998). Being in the same environment produces shared experiences and memories that serve to bond people. We perceive similarity and from that conclude that the other person will like us, thereby initiating communication (Berscheid, 1985). It is reinforcing to meet someone with similar views, as they validate our feelings of being right (Byrne & Clore, 1970). At the same time and for the same reasons we find those who disagree unpleasant (Rosenbaum, 1986; Houts, Robins, & Huston, 1996). As a result of having a common basis, similarity in personality traits provides for smooth communications and interactions between people, therefore similarity is less costly.

4.3 We like those who like us: reciprocal liking

Reciprocal liking is even a more powerful determinant of liking than similarity. In one study a young woman expressed an interest in a male participant by eye contact, listening with rapt attention, and leaning forward with interest. Even when told she had different views the male participants still expressed great liking for the woman (Gold, Ryckman, & Mosley, 1984). Regardless whether we show by means of verbal or non-verbal responses, the most significant factor determining our liking of another person is the belief that the person likes us (Berscheid & Walster, 1978; Kenny, 1994). When we come to believe someone likes us we behave in ways that encourage mutual liking. We express more warmth, and are more likely to disclose, and behave in a pleasant way. So liking someone works like a self-fulfilling prophecy. Expressing liking elicits pleasant behavior and reciprocal liking (Curtis & Miller, 1986).

4.4 Personal characteristics associated with liking

Physical attractiveness is very culturally bound. In some societies voluptuous women are considered beautiful, while in our society the fashion industry and the media define attractiveness as being thin. When it comes to personality based characteristics two factors lead to liking. We like people who show warmth toward others, and people who are socially competent (Lydon, Jamieson, & Zanna, 1988). Warm people are those who have an optimistic outlook on life and people. We like them because they are a source of encouragement in an otherwise discouraging world. Warm people are a pleasure to be around and therefore rewarding. In one study (Folkes & Sears, 1977) the researchers had the participants listen to an interviewee evaluate a variety of objects including movie stars, cities, political leaders. Sometimes the interviewees expressed negativity toward these objects, in other cases positive views. The participants expressed a greater liking for the interviewee who expressed positive views, i.e. displayed warmth toward the rated people and objects.

4.5 Communication skills

Likewise we like more the socially skilled. Social intelligence can be demonstrated by being a good conversationalist. Skilled speakers were seen as more likeable, whereas boring communicators were not only rated as less likeable, but also as less friendly and more impersonal (Leary, Rogers, Canfield, & Coe, 1986). Obviously communication skills are essential to long-lasting relationships. We are especially fond of people whose ways of relating to others are similar to our own (Burleson & Samter, 1996). Those with high communication skills saw interactions as complex with highly valued psychological components. People with low skill levels saw communications as more straightforward and less complicated. To communicate at the same level is a very important aspect of attraction and liking. Operating at the same skill level is rewarding, as we feel empathy and understanding. Those who do not share the same level of communications are less likely to develop long-lasting relationships (Burleson, 1994; Duck & Pittman, 1994).

4.6 Complementarity: Do opposites attract?

The importance of similarity suggests "birds of a feather flock together". But are we not also told that opposites attract? Do tall dark men not prefer short attractive blonds? What about the assertive person meeting the less dominant individual? Or the person who has a rich fantasy life marrying the realist? Are there not times when opposites attract because in some ways we complement each other? Certainly, for sexual relations the vast majority of humankind seeks the opposite sex, only a minority is attracted to similarity. The masculine and feminine is the supreme example from nature that opposites attract.

Complementary personality traits produce liking for only a few personality traits (Levinger, 1964; Winch, 1955). On the whole, however, most studies fail to find evidence that complementarities attract in relationships (Antill, 1983; Levinger, Senn, & Jorgensen, 1970; Neimeyer & Mitchell, 1988). When complementarities lead to attraction, it appears to be a rare exception to the dominant effect of similarity. Even in cases where personalities are complementary on some traits, they have many more similar traits in common.

4.7 Ethnicity and relationships

Ethnic identification is only one dimension of similarity. Interracial couples are similar in other significant ways, in attitudes and values. The dissimilarity is, however, more prominent and is judged more prominently by society which affects an individual evaluation of the dissimilarity. But the significance of similarity in interethnic friendships is less important today than in former times. For example more and more US citizens are dating and marrying outside their own racial and ethnic groups (Fears & Deane, 2001). Attitudes toward interracial relationships and marriage are becoming increasingly accepted in society, and interracial marriages are on the increase. The vast majority of all racial groups in the US approve of interracial marriages today (Goodheart, 2004).

The studies which support interracial tolerance in intimate relationships appear to differ with the public opinion survey to be cited in chapter 9 which indicated parents prefer similarity of race for their daughters. The conclusion of the public opinion survey was that social norms now favor such relationships. However, when the respondents were asked something more personal namely, how would they feel if their daughter would be part of an interracial marriage, the outcome was slightly different. The respondents preferred that their daughter not be a part of an interracial relationship. People are willing to give the normative correct responses to surveys, but hold private and subtler negative attitudes when it affects members of their own family. It must be said, however, that negative evaluations of interracial relationships occur before a relationship is established. Once an interracial relationship is a fact, many opinions change in favor of family harmony and acceptance.

5. Physical Attractiveness: A recommendation for success!
Physical attraction is a powerful determinant of liking and has lifelong benefits. Attend any social event and who do you first notice? If you are a heterosexual man, you will first notice the attractive women, and if you are a woman your eyes will feast on the handsome men. As we shall see there are little differences between the sexes in the appeal of physical attractiveness. First impressions are important, as without these few people would initiate contact. So while physical attractiveness is important in the early phases of a relationship, the benefits continue in a variety of ways.

Notwithstanding the proverb “beauty is only skin deep”, most people behave strongly to physical attraction. There may even be a biological basis as preferences for attractive appearance occur early in life. Fortunately “love is blind”, and we also tend to find those whom we love to be attractive (Kniffin & Wilson, 2004). Since we idealize the beloved we observe beauty where others fail to see it (Murray & Holmes, 1997). Then there is always the case of the “ugly duckling” that later grew into a beautiful swan. Physical development sometimes brings beauty later in life (Zebrowitz, 1997).

In a now classic study (Walster, Aronson, Abrahams, & Rottman, 1966) the researchers randomly assigned freshmen at the University of Minnesota for dates to a dance. The students had previously taken a number of personality measures and aptitude tests. Participants had also been rated independently on physical attractiveness. Having spent a short time dancing and talking, the couples were asked to indicate liking and desire to meet the person again. Perhaps there was insufficient time to evaluate the complex aspects of the date's personality, but the overriding factor in liking was the physical attractiveness of the date. It is also common to think that men pay more attention to women's attractiveness than women do to male bodies. However, in this study there were no differences as female as well as males expressed preferences for physical attractiveness.

5.1 Women like attractive men: Imagine!

Despite the common stereotype that women are attracted to the deeper aspects of a person's character, such as intelligence and competence, women, like men, are impressed by physical attractiveness. They pay as much attention to a handsome man as men do to beautiful women (Duck, 1994a; 1994b; Speed & Gangestad, 1997; Woll, 1986). However, a meta-analysis showed a slightly greater effect for physical attractiveness in men than in women (Feingold, 1990), and some studies supported the stereotype of stronger male preferences for physical attractiveness (Buss, 1989; Howard, Blumstein, & Schwartz, 1987). The contradictions are easy to explain when we remember the different norms governing the attractiveness issue for men and women. Men are more likely to respond to the common and accepted stereotype that physical attractiveness is important for men, whereas women respond to their stereotype that other traits matter. But in actual behavioral preferences there are few differences. In sexual preferences both men and women rate physical attractiveness as the single most important variable (Regan & Berscheid, 1997).

Physical attractiveness probably has biological roots as both genders think it is the single most important trait in eliciting sexual desire (Graziano, Jensen-Campbell, Shebilske, & Lundgren, 1993; Regan & Berscheid, 1995). In one study women participants looked at a photograph of either an attractive or unattractive man, and were led to believe they spoke with him on the phone (Andersen & Bem, 1981). The two photos were used to elicit the physical attractiveness or unattractiveness stereotype. The respondents in both the attractive and unattractive conditions spoke to the same person.

The purpose here, as in the previous study with men (Snyder, Tanke, & Berscheid, 1977), was to see if the women's perceptions of likeability would change depending on whom they thought they were speaking with, an attractive or unattractive man. The "beautiful is good" stereotype also worked for women. When they believed they spoke to an attractive man they perceived him to be more sociable and likeable, compared to when they thought they "talked" to the unattractive man. Later meta-analyses across numerous studies (Eagly, Ashmore, Makhijani, & Longo, 1991; Feingold, 1992; Langlois, Kalakanis, Rubenstein, Larson, Hallam, & Smoot, 2000) produced convincing evidence that physical attractiveness is an important factor also in women's lives.

5.2 As society sees it: the social advantages of the physically attractive

For both sexes and in nearly all the arenas of life the physical attractiveness of both sexes has profound advantages. The attractive person is more popular with both sexes (Curran & Lippold, 1975; Reis, Nezlek, & Wheeler, 1980). In the new age of video dating, participants show strong preferences for attractive potential dates (Woll, 1986). Are those who seek out video dating more shallow? Have they impossible high standards encouraged by Playboy and Glamour magazine? Perhaps, but attractiveness continues to be a positive trait across many forms of social interactions. When an attractive and unattractive confederate is presented as "author" of a novel, the novel is judged better if the participants believe it written by the "attractive author" (Cash & Trimer, 1984; Maruyama & Miller, 1981). Studies have also demonstrated direct effects in the workplace. Individuals make more money the higher their rating on physical attractiveness (Frieze, Oleson, & Russell, 1991; Roszell, Kennedy, & Grabb, 1989). Good looking victims are more likely to receive assistance (West & Brown, 1975), and good looking criminals to receive lower sentence (Stewart, 1980).

*5.3 Some gender difference*s

However, the physical attractiveness factor may be muted for women, and compromises are sometimes made when evaluating a desirable long-term relationship involving the raising of children and the creation of a family. In the committed partnership women recognize also the importance of other traits like integrity, income potential, and stability. They are therefore more willing to marry a partner who is less than perfect in physical appearance. Perhaps for similar reasons women also prefer older partners, whereas men have a preference for youthful women. If the goal of the relationship is family development, women also pay more attention to the economic potential of their partners, whereas this is an indifferent issue for most men (Sprecher, Sullivan, & Hatfield, 1994). For men physical attractiveness is a necessity, whereas for women, while still important, it is more like a luxury. A partner's status and access to resources on the other hand were considered a necessity for women, but a luxury for men (Li, Bailey, Kenrick, & Linsenmeier, 2002). In selecting long term partners, women gave more importance to a man's warmth, trustworthiness, and status, whereas men placed more emphasis on the potential partners attractiveness and vitality (Fletcher, Tither, O'Loughlin, Friesen, & Overall, 2004). So there are some consistent gender differences.

5.4 What do gender differences in partner preference mean?

Evolutionary psychology would assert that gender differences exist because they are functional to the survival of the species. "What leads to maximum reproductive success?" is the question posed by evolutionary psychology (Buss & Kenrick, 1998). Women invest much effort and time in bringing a child into the world. To be successful in reproduction requires that women have stable partners with adequate economic and other resources. In the days of the caveman that meant a good cave, warm fire, and ability to provide game. In our day women look for good earning potential. Men on the other hand invest little, and can impregnate several females. For men therefore the key factor is physical attractiveness. In our evolutionary history men learned that youth and attractiveness is more sexually arousing, and incidentally these qualities in women are associated with fertility and health – men are not looking for fertility and health in the first place, but for good sex.

A sociocultural perspective points to the different roles played by the genders historically (Eagly & Wood, 1999). Men have throughout history been the providers and builders of material comfort; women have been the homemakers. The greater interest in a man's economic potential grew from the unfavorable position of women who even today earn less than men for comparable work. As noted some cross-cultural data (Eagly & Wood, 1999), sex differences in preferences for mates have shifted as women have made socio-economic gains. Other research shows that preferences leading to mate selection have changed, especially over the last number of decades of improved socioeconomic possibilities for women (Buss, Shackelford, Kirkpatrick, & Larson, 2001). Men in many Western countries now think it is a good idea that women earn money, and both sexes place more importance on physical attractiveness. So perhaps physical attractiveness was always important for women also, but confounded by the need for socio-economic support.

5.5 Selecting our mates: gender specific wanted ads in newspapers
Evolution has instilled the majority of both sexes with the desire to reproduce with mates who signal good reproductive health. Heterosexual men and women differ however, in the burden of bringing children into the world, and looking after their babies during the most vulnerable period. This gender difference would suggest that women would be more selective in their choices, as they have more at stake. In all societies studied men are more promiscuous, and women exercise more care in selecting partners, especially for long term relationships (Schmitt, 2003).

Men are attracted to fertility and physical qualities that happen to be associated with fertility, and therefore toward feminine features signaling youth (Singh, 1993). Women on the other hand, with a shorter biological clock, intuitively look for men who have the capacity and desire to invest in their children, and have a good economic future. In fact this difference can be observed weekly in the personal ads that appear in many local papers. Typically men seek youth and attractiveness whereas women seek accomplishments and economic resources (Kenrick & Keefe, 1992; Rajecki, Bledso, & Rasmussen, 1991). Support for this gender difference was found cross-culturally in a study of 37 different societies (Buss, 1989). In all cultures men rated physical attractiveness as more important in a mate, and they preferred younger partners. Women on the other hand preferred partners who were older, and who could provide material resources.

Consistent with the sociocultural perspective, gender differences in mate preferences have shifted somewhat across many cultures as women have gained more socio-economic and political power (Eagly & Wood, 1999). However, these recent changes have not removed fully the historical gender preferences. Men still rank good looks and health higher than women, and women rank the financial prospects of potential mates higher than men. These results call for an interactionist point of view. Gender differences are a function of both our evolutionary past, and our socio-cultural heritage, and it is unlikely we can separate one from the other.

5.6 Social attributions: What we believe about the physical attractive

All cultures have stereotypes that attribute positive qualities to the physically attractive. Dion, Berscheid, & Walster (1972) call this the "what is beautiful is good" attribution. Others have also found support for this common stereotype (Ashmore & Longo, 1995; Calvert, 1988). Meta-analyses have demonstrated the common belief that attractive people have higher levels of social competence, are more extraverted, happier, more assertive, and more sexual (Eagly, Ashmore, Makhijani, & Longo, 1991, Feingold, 1991).

Even young children at a very early age have an awareness of who is and is not attractive. Commonly accepted stereotypes attribute many positive traits and behaviors to the physically attractive. In several experiments the participants were asked to rate a variety of photographs varying in attractiveness (Bar-Tel & Saxe, 1976; Eagly, Ashmore, Makhijani, & Longo, 1991; Feingold, 1992b). Persons rated attractive were perceived to be happier, more intelligent, as having more socio-economic success, and possessing desirable personality traits. This undeserved stereotype is consistent across cultures but varies according to cultural values.

For women more than for men, physical attractiveness is a door opener. Just a look at women's journals, and the obsessive concern with beauty and weight suggests a differential advantage accrues to attractive women. This affects not only personal interactions, but also treatment on the job (Bar-Tal & Saxe, 1976). Over the centuries, physical attractiveness for women was tied to their survival, and social success. It is no wonder then that these historical facts have created a much stronger preoccupation with attractiveness for women (Fredrickson & Roberts (1997).

Some studies show that even from birth babies differ in their relative attractiveness. Mothers provide more affection and play more with their attractive infants than with those babies deemed less attractive (Langois, Ritter, Casey, & Sawin, 1995), and nursery school teachers see them as more intelligent (Martinek, 1981). Many rewards accrue to those deemed attractive in our society. While still infants the attractive child is more popular with other children (Dion & Berscheid, 1974). So very early in life the attractive child is given many benefits, including the perception that he/she posses many positive traits and behaviors (Dion, 1972).

There must be a biological basis when, even before interaction or experience, infants themselves show strong preferences for attractive faces (Langlois, Roggman, Casey, Ritter, Rieser-Danner, & Jenkins, 1987;Langlois, Ritter, Roggman, & Vaughn, 1991). Infant preferences for attractive faces held true for both adults as well as for the faces of other infants. Even when presented to strangers, the infants showed preference for the attractive face, and were more content to play and interact with the attractive stranger. On the other hand they turned away three times as often from the stranger deemed unattractive as from the one rated attractive (Langlois, Roggman, & Rieser-Danner, 1990).

Being given such great advantages at birth, it is no wonder that a person's relative attractiveness has an effect on development and self-confidence. The physically attractive do in fact display more contentment and satisfaction with life, and feel more in control of their fates (Diener, Wolsic, & Fujita, 1995; Umberson & Hughes, 1987). Being treated so nice from birth onward produces the confidence and traits that encourage further positive interactions and rewards (Langlois et al, 2000). Other people by their positive regards create a self-fulfilling prophecy as the attractive person responds with the expected socially skillful behavior.

5.7 The universality of the "beautiful is good" attribution

Is the stereotype present in various cultures? Research would tend to support this contention (Albright, Malloy, Dong, Kenny, Fang, Winquist, & Yu, 1997; Chen, Shaffer, & Wu, 1997; Wheeler & Kim, 1997). Although beauty is a door opener in all cultures, each culture may vary as to what traits are considered desirable. Some traits associated with attractiveness like being strong and assertive are especially valued in North American samples. Other traits such as being sensitive, honest, and generous are valued in Korean cultures. Some traits like happy, poised, extraverted, and sexually warm and responsive are liked in all the cultures studied.

5.8 Physical attractiveness has immediate impact and provides vicarious prestige

Experimental research shows that vicarious prestige is derived from association with an attractive person (Sigall & Landy, 1973). In one study the participant's impression of an experimental confederate was influenced by whether the collaborator was seated with an attractive or unattractive woman. When with an attractive woman the confederate was perceived as both likeable and confident. There are predictable gender differences. Being with an attractive woman has more positive consequences for a man, than being with an attractive man has for a woman (Bar-Tal & Saxe, 1976; Hebl & Mannix, 2003). US society has coined the term "trophy wife" to demonstrate the appreciation of a man, usually wealthy, being with a young and attractive spouse.

5.9 Cultural differences and consistencies in physical attractiveness: Reproductive health

There are some variations among cultures as to what is considered attractive. Western society has changed over time in evaluation of female beauty. Like mentioned before, just a short historical time ago voluptuous women were considered attractive whereas today the skinny woman is considered more alluring. In different cultures there is also different preferences for skin color and ornaments (Hebl & Heatherton, 1997). In the China of the past, artificially bound small feet of women were thought sexually stimulating and in other cultures women lengthened their necks by adding rings and stretching that body part. So there are cultural variations in what is considered beautiful and attractive. However, there is also considerable cross-cultural agreement on what is physically attractive as there are features of the human face and body that have universal appeal (Langlois et al, 2000; Rhodes, Yoshikawa, Clark, Lee, McKay, & Akamatsu, 2001). Asians, Blacks and Caucasians share common opinions about what are considered attractive facial features (Bernstein, Lin, McClennan, 1982; Perrett, May, & Yoshikawa, 1994).

As discussed previously, even infants have a preference for attractive faces. The appreciation of beauty must derive from something very functional to our survival and hence to reproduction. Physical attractiveness most importantly signifies good health, and reproductive fitness. Keep in mind that those traits that are functional to our survival are also preserved in biology and our genes. If our ancestors had been attracted to unhealthy persons, they would not have had any offspring. Nature informs us by physical attractiveness that the proposed partner possesses good reproductive health.

We are attracted to faces that typify the norm, and stay away from those that are anomalous. Langlois & Roggman, (1990) in fact, found evidence for the preference for the face scored by independent judges to be culturally typical or average. By means of computer technology, they managed to make composite faces of a number of persons (or average faces), and found that these were considered more attractive than different individual faces. Having average features is one component of beauty. Others have, however, shown that there are also other features (higher cheek bones, thinner jaw, and larger eyes) that contribute to attractiveness (Perett, May, & Yoshikawa, 2994).

Bilateral symmetry is a significant feature in physical attraction (Thornhill & Gangestad, 1993). Departures from bilateral symmetry may indicate the presence of disease, or the inability to resist disease. Average features and symmetry are attractive, from the evolutionary perspective, conceivably because they signal good health to a prospective mate. These cues exist at such a basic level that we have no conscious awareness of their presence. We just know what is attractive to us, and approach the other person depending on that quality, and our own level of attractiveness.

5.10 Attraction variables and first encounters

If we ask people to recall relationships of the past, what do they volunteer as being the cause of initial attraction? In one study, the participants were asked to describe how they had fallen in love or formed a friendship describing a specific relationship from the past (Aron, Dutton, Aron, & Iverson, 1989). These accounts were then categorized for the presence or absence of the attraction variables. For those describing falling in love, reciprocal liking and attractiveness were mentioned with high frequency. To start a relationship many of us just wait to see if an attractive person makes a move that we can interpret as liking. Reciprocal liking and attractiveness in several meanings are also associated with the formation of friendships. Although this holds true for both genders, conversation appears as one additional important quality for females. Women find quality conversation of greater importance than do men in friendship attraction (Duck, 1994a; Fehr, 1996).

Similarity and proximity, on the other hand, were mentioned with lower frequency. Perhaps these variables seem obvious and therefore do not become part of our memory or consciousness. Similarity and proximity may still play very important roles in interpersonal attraction. They respectively focus attention on those deemed eligible and of interest, and on opportunities for encounters. Similar reports emphasizing the importance of the attraction variables, reciprocal liking, attractiveness, similarity, and proximity, have been obtained from memory reports of initial encounters in other cultures as well (Aron & Rodriquez, 1992; Sprecher, Aron, Hatfield, Cortese, Potapova, & Levitskaya, 1994).

5.11 Level of attractiveness

Water finds its own level, and that seems to hold true for relationships. People seek out mates at the approximate same level of attractiveness they possess (Murstein, 1986). We tend to pair off with people who are rated similar in attractiveness whether for dating or for long-term relationships (Feingold, 1988). Similarity in physical attractiveness affects relationship satisfaction (White, 1980). Those similar in physical attractiveness fall in love.

What is an equitable match in the market place of relationships? If one partner is less attractive perhaps he has compensating qualities like being rich. The dating market is a social market place where potential friends or mates sell compensating qualities. Consistent with the previous discussion, men offer social status and seek attractiveness (Koestner & Wheeler, 1988). Since the market place dominates our psychology perhaps that explains also why beautiful women seek compensation if they are to consider a less attractive man. Beautiful women tend to marry higher in social status (Elder, 1969). In the long run market place psychology may also be responsible for our incredible divorce rates. If the exchange of relationship qualities is not satisfactory why not just look for something better? When relationships are based on exchange, and qualities like physical attractiveness deteriorate over the lifespan, no wonder that many become dissatisfied and consider their alternatives.

6. Theories of Interpersonal attraction

In some societies the market place seems to determine all aspects of culture and interpersonal interactions. It is no wonder then that theories of interpersonal attraction emphasize qualities important in the market place: rewards, costs, alternatives, and fairness. All relationships involve interdependence and we have the power to influence outcomes and satisfaction. In chapter1 we briefly discussed the following theories. Now it is time to see their application to interpersonal attraction.

6.1 Social exchange theory

The attraction variables we have discussed all contain potential rewards. Why is it rewarding to be with people who are similar? Similar people validate our self-concept, and that is experienced as rewarding. What are the rewarding aspects of propinquity? If a potential friend lives next door, we do not have to make much of an effort to meet him or her, and that is experienced as rewarding. Is physical attractiveness rewarding? Physical attractiveness brings status to the partner, and that is rewarding. What about reciprocal liking? That can be experienced as validating our self-concept and our sense of worthiness. So many of the variables we have discussed previously can be interpreted by a theory that has rewards and costs as a basis, one such theory is social exchange theory (Homans, 1961; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Secord & Backman, 1964; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

According to the economic perspective of social exchange theory people feel positive or negative toward their relationships depending on costs and benefits. All relationships involve rewards as well as costs, and relationship outcomes are defined as the rewards minus the costs. The partner may bring comfort, sexual excitement, support in bad times, someone to share information, someone to learn from, all possible rewards. However, the partnership also has costs. The partner might be arrogant, a poor provider, unfaithful, and have different values. These are the potential costs. Social exchange theory proposes that we calculate these rewards and costs consciously or at the subliminal level. If the outcome is positive, we are satisfied and stay in the relationship; if not, we bring the relationship to an end (Foa & Foa, 1974; Lott& Lott, 1974).

Relationship satisfaction in social exchange theory depends on one additional variable: our comparison level. What do you expect to be the outcome of your current relationship based on your past experiences in other relationships? If you were married to a fantastic man who died you will always have high expectations when meeting potential new partners. On the other hand, at work you have experienced successive poor managers. In transferring to a new department you are pleasantly surprised by an ordinary supervisor, as all your previous work relationships have been negative. Social exchange theory asserts that what we expect from current relationships is laid down in the history of our relationships. Some of us have had successful and rewarding friendships and therefore have high comparison levels. Others have experienced much disappointment and therefore have low expectations. Your satisfaction therefore depends on the comparison level developed from experience.

However, you may also evaluate the relationship from the perspective of what is possible. Perhaps you have friends that have rewarding relationships or rich partners. This provides you with another level of comparison, namely a comparison level of alternatives. If you ditched this partner and started circulating again, you might meet mister right who is rich, attractive and supportive. After all it is a big world so there is a probability that another relationship will prove more rewarding.

Some people have high comparison levels; they have had good fortune in past relationships. Their comparison level for an alternative relationship may therefore be very high, and not easy to meet. Others have low comparison levels for alternatives and will stay in a costly relationship, as they have no expectation that other attachments will provide better results. Women in abusive relationships, for example, often stay because they do not believe that other relationships will improve life (Simpson, 1987).

6.2 Equity theory: Our expectation of fairness

According to equity theory, we feel content in a relationship when what we offer is proportionate to what we receive. Happiness in relationships comes from a balance between inputs and rewards, so we are content when our social relationships are perceived to be equitable. On the other hand, our sense of fairness is disturbed when we are exploited and others take advantage of us. We all possess intuitive rules for determining whether we are being treated fairly (Clark & Chrisman, 1994). Workers who are paid very little while working very hard feel the unfairness or imbalance between input and reward, especially when others benefit from their hard work. These feelings of injustice constituted the original motivation of the workers movement, the trade unions, and the workers political parties.

At dinnertime do all the children get the same size piece of pie, do we distribute the food in an equitable manner? Equality is the main determinant of our evaluation of the outcome among friends and in family interactions (Austin, 1980). There are of course times when one child's needs are greater than another sibling. Many will recognize that families respond to that issue with "from each according to his ability to each according to his need". One child might be very sick and need all the family's resources. The idea that benefits should be distributed according to need is another aspect of fairness (Clark, Graham, & Grote, 2002).

Equity theory asserts furthermore that people's benefits should equal their input. If we work harder than others we should receive a larger salary (Hatfield, Traupmann, Sprecher, Utne, & Hay, 1985). When people perceive unfairness or inequity they will try to restore the balance. For example, if you work for a low wage you may get together with others who are unfairly treated as well and seek more compensation. You may also cognitively adjust by reasoning that there are no alternatives, and that you are lucky to have any income at all. Then you can use cognitive strategies to change your perception of unfairness. If neither of the strategies bring satisfaction, then it is time to quit and look for some other career.

In intimate relationships satisfaction is also determined to some degree by equity (Sprecher, 2001). For example, how to distribute the household work fairly is an important issue for many young couples. Those couples that cannot find an equitable balance report more distress (Grote & Clark, 2001). Gender ideology plays a role in relationship satisfaction. Feminist ideology historically reacted to the great unfairness brought on by discrimination toward women at home and at work. Feminist women may therefore be unhappier if they perceive inequity in household work (Van Yperen & Buunk, 1991).

6.3 Equity and power

Partners may prefer different solutions to daily equity problems. Should the resources of the family go toward the husband's education, or to buying a house? In a world of scarce resources there are always decisions that may favor only one party. The power balance decides to what degree either partner in an intimate relationship can influence the feelings, thoughts and behaviors of the other partner. Are all decisions made mutually? How do partners come to an agreement about what type of decision-making is fair and equitable?

What determines power in a relationship? Social norms about gender behavior are a powerful determinant. Traditionally women were taught to respect the dominant role of men as "head" of the family. The man historically had total control over wife and children. Today similar traditional patterns continue throughout the world. There is even the very famous case of a princess in the Saudi Arabian royal family who was executed by orders of her grandfather. Her offense was having a relationship based on romance rather than accepting her father's decision for an arranged marriage. These so-called honor killings, when women are murdered to restore family "honor", follow a similar pattern of absolute male control. In the western world these traditional gender roles are giving way to more equitable relations in society and in the family.

Partners may have different resources. When the man has resource advantages, he also tends to be more dominant. When the wife earns at least 50 percent of the household income, there is more equitable power sharing. Power is also partly based on the feelings of dependency within the relationship (Waller, 1938). When one partner is more dependent, the other has more power. This holds also for psychological dependency. If one partner has a greater interest in maintaining the relationship than the other, the dependency gives more power to the partner.

So there are variations in how power works out in relationships. In some relationships the man is totally dominant, and some cultures support this sex role resolution. However, we have observed many changes in gender roles and relations over the past decades. Women have gained more social power and more equity in intimate relationships. In one US survey of married couples the majority (64%) claimed equality in power relations (Blumstein & Schawartz, 1983). A large number (27%) reported that the man was dominant, and 9 percent that the wife controlled power in the marriage. In a more recent US study (Felmlee, 1994) 48 percent of the women and 42 percent of the men described their relationship as equal in power, with most of the remaining respondents reporting that the man was dominant. Couples can achieve equality in different ways with a division of responsibilities. Depending on the situation one of the parties may have more power, but overall there is a sense of equality. Some studies find that consensus between a couple is more important than negotiating all the fine details of power sharing, and relationship satisfaction appears equally high in male dominated as in power sharing relationships (Peplau, 1984). In close relationships there is less need to negotiate everything and produce equitable solutions. If the satisfaction level is high, the parties are less concerned with perfect equity. It is whether the relationship is rewarding that counts (Berscheid & Reis, 1998).

7. Exchange among strangers and in close communal relationships
Exchange relationships also exist between strangers or in functional relationships at work. Exchange relationships tend to be more temporary and the partners feel less responsibility toward one another compared to more intimate relationships. Satisfaction in all exchange relationships is as noted determined by the principle of fairness. Did your professor give you a grade that reflected your work? Work related outcomes and satisfactions are determined by application of the fairness principle.

In communal relationships, such as families, on the other hand, people’s outcome depends on their need. In family relationships we give what we can, and receive from the family what it is able to provide. Communal relationships are typically long-lasting, and promote feelings of mutual responsibility (Clark & Mills, 1979).

We look after our children not because we expect a reward, but rather to respond to the needs of our dependants. Likewise children look after their infirm parents, because of feelings of responsibility. In intimate relationships partners respond to the needs of the other, without expecting to be paid back in exact coin or immediately. There may be rewards for both parties in the long run. In short, exchange theory better predicts behavior in relationships where the parties are preoccupied with inputs and rewards, whereas in communal relations the partners are more concerned with meeting the needs of the relationship (Clark, Mills, Powell, 1986).

Mills and Clark (1994; 2001) have defined further differences between exchange in different types of relationships. Among strangers you are not likely to discuss emotional topics whereas that is expected in communal interactions. In communal relationships helping behavior is expected, whereas it would be seen as altruistic in relations between strangers. Moreover, a person is perceived as more selfish if failing to help a friend, than if he failed to come to the aid of a stranger. In real intimate relations between lovers the lines between partners is blurred as a feeling of "we" pervades. When we benefit a loved one, we feel like we are benefiting ourselves (Aron & Aron, 2000). The beloved is seen as part of the self, and terms like "we" is used more frequently than "I" as relations move beyond exchange and equity concerns (Agnew, Van Lange, Rusbolt, & Langston, 1998).

7.1 Culture and social exchange

Cultural differences affect relationships. In Western society some of our relationships reflect market economic values such as exchange and some forms of equity. Asian societies have in the past been based on more traditional, communal standards. Economic companies in Asia often take a paternal role, offering life long job security. How are the new market economies affecting psychology in Asia and Eastern Europe? Assuming a relationship between economic relations and psychology, we might expect a greater shift toward social exchange relations. Social exchange theory also plays a role in intimate relationships in a variety of cultures (Lin & Rusbult, 1995; Rusbult & Van Lange, 1996; Van Lange, Rusbolt, Drigotas, Arriaga, Witcher, & Cox, 1997). Although communal relations are more characteristic of interdependent cultures, there is still a role for social exchange for some relationships in these societies as well as in more independent cultures.

7.2 Evaluation of relationship satisfaction

How committed people are to a relationship depends on satisfaction, on the potential alternatives available, and on the investment made (Rusbult, 1983). If we are not satisfied in a relationship there are alternatives to be explored. Before we end the relationship we carefully assess one particular factor. Namely, how much have I invested in the relationship? How much would I lose if I left the relationship? Would I be better or worse off, many women in abusive relationships ask themselves. Investment is also a factor the individual considers prior to the commitment to dissolve of a relationship. Investment comprises several things: the money available for a new life, a house that might be lost, the emotional well being of children in the relationship, and of course all the work that has been invested in the relationship. This model also predicts commitment in destructive relationships (Rusbult & Martz, 1995). Women who had poorer economic prospects, and were strongly invested with children present, were more likely to tolerate some forms of abuse.

It is difficult to evaluate equitable outcomes as partners trade different resources. Equity however, remains a factor even in intimate relationships (Canary & Stafford, 2001). In intimate relationships there are few rigid give and take rules. Perhaps the wife does all the housework, does most of the child rising, and is a romantic partner while the husband is only a student. It may seem unfair, but the investment may pay off down the line in higher income and status. In intimate relationships partners have the long view in mind when evaluating equity. The partners trust that eventually everything will work out to the benefit of the whole family unit.

7.3 Self-disclosure: building intimate relationships

Self-disclosure is the bridge to intimacy and liking (Collins & Miller, 1994). When we disclose important information to others we become vulnerable, and so self-disclosure is a form of trust that invites reciprocation. People who self-disclose are therefore seen as trusting people, and trust is an essential component in intimate relationships. When we open ourselves up to another, reciprocation tends to occur (Dindia, 2002). Telling someone something significant is an investment in trust, and if the relationship is to move to another level, a gradual process of reciprocation is required. Reciprocal self-disclosure is a key factor in liking and builds bridges to the deeper and more meaningful part of a person's inner self (Chaikin & Derlega, 1974).

There are of course risks involved in self-disclosure. The other person may not be interested and fail to reciprocate. We may also reveal something about ourselves that offends the values of the other person thereby causing rejection. Having revealed significant information, we have made ourselves vulnerable to the other person's ability to manipulate or betray our confidence. Many prisoners have after the fact found it unwise that they confessed their crimes to cell mates who later sold the information. For these and other reasons we are often cautious in self-disclosure and will conceal inner feelings (Finkenauer & Hazam, 2000).

In individualist cultures relationship satisfaction is related to self-disclosure. In the more collectivist cultures social relations are often more inhibited (Barnlund, 1989). Japanese students were found to self-disclose much less than American students. Self-disclosure is important to love-based marriages in both American and Indian societies (Yelsma & Athappilly, 1988). However for Indian couples in arranged marriages, marital satisfaction was independent of self-disclosure. Perhaps in these formal relationships satisfaction depends more on completion of agreements and contractual expectations.

Cultural norms determine to a large extent the pattern of self-disclosure across many societies. In western culture emotional expression is normative for women and therefore acceptable. The emphasis on rugged individualism for men suggests that our society suppresses intimacy among men. Hence emotional expression by men is generally directed toward females. In Muslim countries and some societies in Asia, same sex intimacy is encouraged (Reis & Wheeler, 1991).

7.4 Gender ***differences in self-disclosure?***

A meta-analysis of hundreds of studies showed that women disclose significantly more than men (Dindia & Allen, 1992). Although the overall differences were not large they were statistically significant. Within same sex friendships, women reveal more of themselves than men who are more cautious with their male friends. Verbal communication appears especially important to women, whereas men cement their relationships with best friends through shared activities (Caldwell & Peplau, 1992). Women also seem more willing to share their weaknesses, whereas men will disclose their strengths. The sexes also differ in revealing gender specific information. Men like to share their risk-taking behavior, for example their last mountain climbing trip, or when they saved someone from drowning. Women are more likely to share concerns about their appearance (Derlega, Durham, Gockel, & Sholis, 1981). Social psychology is history so perhaps things have changed since the time of this study.

8. Romantic and loving intimacy

Reciprocal liking is the first step on the road to romance and intimacy. Some basic components are common to all love relationships, whether romantic or friendship. Hallmarks of these loving relationships include valuing the partner, showing mutual support, and experiencing mutual enjoyment (Davis, 1985). Romantic love differs from friendship or parental love by its sexual interest, by fascination with the beloved, and by expectation of exclusiveness of affection. Passionate love is deeply emotional and exciting. It is the pervading and overwhelming desire for a union with the beloved (Hatfield, 1988). When reciprocated passionate love brings with it feelings of joy and fulfillment, all life can be managed with such a relationship secured. When the partners are insecure however, passionate love can also bring jealousy and pain (Kenrick & Cialdini, 1977).

8.1 Physiological arousal or emotion of love?

We can feel intense emotional excitement in a variety of situations. The physiological reactions are similar whether you are mountain climbing or being aroused by being physically close to your beloved. The attributions we make are what make some emotions romantic. Anything that arouses us physiologically can also create romantic feelings and more intense attractions (Dutton & Aron, 1989). From their classic experiment in which an attractive young lady approached young men as they crossed on a long suspension bridge high above the river (described in chapter 2) it would appear that the physical arousal produced by the high bridge (probably fear) increased the men's romantic responses.

Are there gender differences in experiencing romantic love? Some findings indicate that men are more likely to fall in love, and are less likely to fall out of love, or break up a premarital relationship (Peplau & Gordon, 1985). Since the experience of love is different from promiscuity this finding is not a contradiction of the male tendency in that direction. Perhaps men are more deprived of intimacy and feel the greater need?

8.2 Intimacy and love

Many people in our world long to experience the feelings of intimacy and love with another person. What is intimacy and love? We may know how it feels, yet find it difficult to understand. Loneliness comes from being disconnected from others, and from feeling misunderstood or unappreciated. Intimacy is the reverse of that coin. Intimacy is that lovely moment when someone understands and validates us (Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004; Reis & Shaver, 1988). We feel intimate when our partner responds and extends to us unconditional positive regard. Intimacy is felt when despite our shortcomings our partner extends full support, and when we can truly “count on the other person” being steadfast despite the trials of life.

Initially intimacy may manifest itself as a giddy feeling of joy. We feel the fascination or infatuation, but do not always understand the experience at any rational level. The process begins by sharing important feelings either verbally or non-verbally. The partner reciprocates and conveys a feeling of understanding and support (Berscheid & Reis, 1998). Communication is the key to intimacy, the more partners engage in meaningful conversation the more intimacy is experienced (Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, & Ryan, 2000). Sharing deep feelings of love and having these feelings reciprocated is the bridge over the still waters of love (Mackey, Diemer, & O’Brien, 2000).

Men and women experience intimacy in similar ways (Burleson, 2003). We all attach value and meaning to our intimate relationships. Women, however, tend to express more readily the emotions leading to intimacy (Aries, 1996). Women also tend to be more intimate in same sex relationships than men, and place a higher value on intimate relations. Our socialization allows women greater emotional expressiveness, and they become more skilled emotional communicators compared to men. One source of relationship dissatisfaction is the discrepancy between the genders in the desire for intimate interactions.

Romantic relationship brings intimacy to a logical conclusion. When two people fall in love, trust each other, and communicate at a meaningful level of intimacy, sexual relations becomes one more expression of love. Intimacy leads to passion, and if lucky also to commitment (Sternberg, 1986). Intimacy combined with passion is romantic love. In long lasting relationships the passion may fade away. When that occurs intimacy may combine with commitment and form companionate love, or intimacy without sexual arousal.

For those who have long futures together, intimacy, passion, and commitment form what Sternberg calls consummate love, the basis of a life long relationship. The longer a relationship survives the trials of life, the more likely it is to move toward companionate love. Companionate love is based on deep feelings of affectionate attachment derived from mutual history and shared values (Carlson

& Hatfield, 1992). Many couples feel disillusionment when the romantic phase moves to the next step in life. The inability to keep the romantic flame alive contributes to loss of affection and our high divorce rate. People in the US tend to focus on the personal feelings of romance, a luxury of a wealthy society. People in Asia are more concerned with the practical aspects of living together (Dion & Dion, 1991; 1993). Passionate love brings children, but to raise them requires companionate love and not mutual obsession. Companionate love is just as real as the initial passion, and is essential for the survival of families and the species.

Most people experience romantic relationships at some point in their lives. Some will say that these relationships are essential to our sense of well-being (Myers, 2000a, Myers, 2000b). Successful romantic relations contribute to life satisfaction, and to our overall condition of health (Berscheid & Reis, 1998). However, not all romantic relationships are successful. As noted earlier about 50 percent of all marriages in the western world end in divorce, perhaps half of those that remain are unhappy. We need to understand what causes such profound disillusionment (Fincham, 2003).

8.3 Disillusionment and divorce

Many relationships become bankrupt and one or both parties decide to split (Myers, 2000a, Thernstrom, 2003). There are some who feel that if the trend continues eventually two-thirds of all marriages and partnerships will end in divorce (Spanier, 1992). And what of the surviving marriages? We cannot assume that they continue because the parties are happy in their relationship! Some unhappy relationships continue for reasons of dependency or moral requirements. The divorce statistics are a tragic commentary about our inability to adjust to changing sex roles in modern society. Divorce becomes an option for many couples in modern society as women feel less economically dependent on men, and feel they have alternatives.

Many studies indicate that marriages produce less contentment than they did 30 years ago (Glenn, 1991). Conflict in marriages has caused many negative health consequences, for example cardiac illness, and negative effects on the immune system (Kiecolt-Glaser, Malarkey, Cacioppo, & Glaser, 1994). There are always victims in divorce. Children of divorced parents experience many negative outcomes in childhood as well as later in life (Wallerstein, Lewis, & Blakeslee, 2000). Ending a romantic relationship produces extreme disillusionment in couples, and ranks among life’s most stressful experiences.

8.4 The role of social exchange and stressful negotiations

Why do relationships fail? We live in a world dominated by preoccupations about what is fair in relationships, is it a wonder that couples tire of the constant negotiations? Social exchange theory has helped researchers identify both destructive and constructive behaviors affecting divorce (Rusbult, 1987; Rusbult & Zembrodt, 1983). Contributing to divorce occurs when one party abuses his/her partner and threatens to leave the marriage. Other couples allow the relationship to slowly deteriorate by passively retreating and refusing to deal with issues. When both parties exhibit these destructive patterns, divorce is the typical outcome (Rusbult, Yovetich, & Verne, 1996).

8.5 Fatal attractions

One cause for divorce is what is called “fatal attractions” (Femlee, 1995). Often the qualities that first attract one to another end up being the quality most disliked. The outgoing individual attracts the shy person. However, after enduring constant social activity the shy person feels that enough is enough. Fatal attractions occur when someone is significantly different from the other person. The immature person is attracted to someone much older. Later in the marriage when the older person is not interested in youthful activities, the age difference becomes the cause for conflict (Femlee, 1998). These findings again point to the importance of similarity in the relationship which functions not just to produces initial attraction, but also long-term contentment. Some initial attractions of the socially gifted lead to negative outcomes also labeled “fatal attractions” (Felmlee, Flynn, & Bahr, 2004). An initial attraction to a partner’s competence and drive for example, was later in the relationship perceived as alienating and as demonstrating workaholic attitudes that were destructive to the relationship. Some respondents who were initially attracted to a partner’s intelligence later were repelled by what they considered a considerable ego.

8.6 Personality differences and demography

Other research has focused on the personality of those who divorce. People who come into a relationship with negative baggage from other relationships are more likely to split. Those who are neurotic, anxious, and emotionally volatile are divorce prone (Karney & Bradbury, 1997; Kurdek, 1992). Neurotics spend much time feeling negative emotions that negatively impacts the partner and the marriage. They are also more likely to bring other types of stress to the relationship including health issues and problems (Watson & Pennebaker, 1989).

Neurotic people react strongly to interpersonal conflict and therefore are less satisfied in relationships (Bolger & Schilling, 1991). If a person is overly sensitive, he or she is more likely to look for rejection and have greater difficulties in establishing or continuing intimate relationships (Downey & Feldman, 1996;Downey, Freitas, Michaelis, & Khouri, 1998).

8.7 Demographic variables and divorce

Some demographic factors are related to dissatisfaction. Generally those who have lower socioeconomic status are more likely to end marriages (Williams & Collins, 1995). Lower socioeconomic status brings stress into a marriage, including money worries and job insecurity. Marrying at a young age is related to lower socioeconomic resources (Berscheid & Reis, 1998). Sometimes the very young do not have the education needed to succeed in an increasingly competitive world. If they have no other resources they often depend on minimum wage jobs, in a constant struggle to keep their heads above water. In the US young married couples often have no insurance, poor housing, and few prospects for improvement, but this situation is different in Western Europe. Young couples often lack the maturity to cope, and a willingness to put the interests of the other person first.

8.8 Conflict in intimate relationships

Most people do not care what mere acquaintances think of their preferences in life. Whatever acquaintances believe will have few consequences either good or bad. However, those people who are close to us can have profound effects on our goal attainment and our happiness. The frequency of interaction with intimate friends or family produces more opportunities for conflict. For example, a teenager wants to attend a party, but his parents want him to study. In intimate relationships we feel the stresses of life, and often latch out at those we should love and protect. The birth of a new child is experienced as stress by most couples, as is death in the family or other significant loss (Bradbury, Rogge, & Lawrence, 2001) but these types of stress usually does not lead to conflicts.

Most marriages experience at least occasional unpleasant disagreements (McGonagle, Kesler, & Schilling, 1992). No marriage or partnership is perfect, all relationships reflect varying interests and preferences. As couples become more interdependent, and do more things together, opportunities for conflict increase (McGonagle, Kessler, & Schilling, 1992). Intimate partners fight over a variety of issues from political and religious disagreements, to household responsibilities

(Fincham, 2003).

Conflict occurs when we interfere with someone's preferences, and frustrate goal attainment. One partner thinks it is important to save for a house or children's education. The other partner wants to enjoy life now and use the money for travel. Compromises can often be found, but at times conflicting goals add to tension and disillusionment in the relationship.

Some conflicts are caused by the behaviors of the partner. Drinking to excess or using drugs are causes for conflict. Since we live in a changing world, we may also differ in our perceptions of our responsibilities and privileges in the relationship. A tradition minded man may see household chores as "woman's work", whereas an egalitarian woman may have expectations of an equal division of such tasks. Finally, conflict may also be caused by the attributions we make of the partner's behavior. Do we give the partner the benefit of the doubt, or do we attribute her/his behavior to bad intent? If the partner has difficulty in finding rewarding work do we attribute that to an unpromising work situation and general unemployment, or do we believe the partner is indifferent and lazy?

These three levels of conflict – level of integration, interference and behavior – reflect the three ways that partners are interdependent. At the behavioral level, partners may have different expectations. At the normative level the partners believe in different rules (egalitarian or traditional) for their relationship. Conflict is likely if the wife has an egalitarian perspective, but the husband is traditionally minded. At the dispositional level, conflict may be a result of the partner's disagreement over attributions for the conflictive behavior (Braiker & Kelley, 1979). Most conflicts have the potential to be harmful to marriages, but some relationships can be helped by an open discussion of disagreements and recognition of the possibility for change (Holman & Jarvis, 2003).

Conflict may also occur as a result of the blaming game. Attributions of blame are especially toxic to a relationship (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990). Dissatisfied couples blame each other for problems in the relationship. Blaming is another way of attributing negative causes to the partner's behavior. Even when the partner performs a positive act the partner may attribute it to bad intentions. Gifts of flowers may for example not be considered an act of love by the blaming partner, but as designed to serve some ulterior purpose. Dissatisfied couples make attributions that consistently cast the partner's behavior in a negative light

(McNulty & Karney, 2001).

8.9 The interpersonal dynamics of unhappy couples

Studies of married partners have pointed to some significant dynamics that are powerful predictors of divorce (Levenson & Gottman 1983; Gottman & Levenson, 1992). The researchers got married couples to talk about a significant conflict in their lives and then subsequently coded the interaction for negative responses. Based on these observations the researchers identified four types of behaviors that could predict with 93 percent accuracy whether the couple would divorce (Gottman & Levenson, 2000).

The four toxic behaviors include criticism (1). Those who consistently find fault with their partners will have unhappy marriages. The tone of the criticism (2) also makes a difference. Some partners criticize in ways that belittle the other person. Others know how to criticize in a lighthearted or playful way, and the outcome can then be positive (Keltner, Young, Heerey, Oemig, & Monarch, 1998). To solve problems in a relationship requires the ability to talk openly, and without eliciting defensiveness in the partner. Some people are so neurotic that even the slightest criticism elicits anxiety and rejection. Another dysfunctional way of dealing with conflict is to stonewall the issue (3), deny the existence of any problems, or convey the impression that the problem is unworthy of serious discussion. Conflict denial is also related to the final toxic behavior, the emotion of contempt (4). When a partner consistently looks down on the other person as inferior and expresses feelings of superiority that contempt is the ultimate expression of disillusionment and highly predictive of divorce (Gottman & Levenson, 1999).

8.10 The market economy and divorce in China

Chinese society now exhibits similar marital problems to those of long established market economies. Nationwide the divorce rate has skyrocketed 67 percent between 2000 and 2005, and is still increasing (Beech, 2006). It would appear that psychological concepts derived from the market economy have entered marital relations in China with similar consequences to those in western capitalist nations. However, this development might also been explained by an emerging courage by women to break away from traditions and demand justice and an equal say in a relationship. New terms such as “flash divorce” have emerged as it is now possible to get divorced in China in as little as 15 minutes. The divorce rate is mainly due to women's dissatisfaction with the unfaithfulness of men. Women themselves now have more economic power and do not have to put up with relationships that doomed the happiness of their mothers and grandmothers. Economic independence has increased women's expectations from their relationships and, when not met, disillusionment has led to dissatisfaction. The material underpinnings of this revolution are indicated by female requirements for marriage in Shanghai that now include the necessity of the man owning a car, a nice apartment, and a considerable bank account. There are those who say, "materialism is being pursued at the expense of traditional values like love" (Beach, 2006: 52). Couples have become more skeptical or cynical about the marriage relationship. According to Beach there were 441,000 fewer marriages in 2005 compared to the previous year. The difference in valuing marriage between individualistic and collectivistic cultures is broken down by the relentless march of market economy psychology resulting from globalization (Dion & Dion, 1993; Dion & Dion, 1996).

8.11 The emotional consequences of ending a relationship

A key factor in how people react to a breakup of a relationship is the role each person played in the decision (Akert, 1998). The research showed that the person who decided the breakup coped the best. The partner who decided to split generally found the ending of the relationship less sad, although even in that case there were some negative consequences reported, including higher frequency of headaches. The party who was least responsible for the decision reported more unhappiness and anger. All partners in a breakup situation reported some physical reactions within weeks. The break of deep emotional ties is extremely stressful.

The least negative consequences occur when the couple allow for mutual decision-making. It reduces somewhat the negative symptoms reported, although 60 percent still reported some negative reactions, with women suffering the most (or perhaps being more honest in reporting). Can people stay friends after a romantic breakup? It depends on gender. Men are usually not interested in continuing a relationship on a friendship basis, whereas women are more interested. Again what seems to be a key is whether the breakup is based on a mutual decision; in that case there are stronger possibilities for a continued friendship.

8.12 Forming satisfying and lasting relationships

How can we create relationships that result in happy outcomes? From the perspective of exchange theory, the focus must be on more profit in the relationship. We can increase profit by either reducing the costs of interaction, or increasing rewards to each partner (Rusbult, 1983). The more rewarding a relationship as defined by the individual the more satisfaction it produces. What constitute costs is less well understood. When the wife puts a husband through college while raising their children is that a cost or a sacrifice for a happier future (Clark & Grote, 1998)? In intimate and close relationships costs are simply the willingness to put aside egoistic interest for the sake of the relationship. As noted earlier sacrifice may be perceived as being rewarding in the long-term vision of the future life of the couple.

Since we live in market economies which encourages social comparison and affects our psychology, many partners are tempted to look at the outcomes for other couples as well as their own expectations of satisfaction when evaluating their relationship. A key to happiness is to meet the expectations we had when we married. We can always find those that are doing less well that we are on a variety of criteria. One party may not be happy with the level of emotional intimacy in the relationship, but can point to the neighbor with an alcoholic spouse as a comparison standard (Buunk, Oldersma, & De Dreu, 2001). The satisfaction of downward comparison can be seen in the popularity of the yellow press and the scandal newspapers. Many people enjoy reading about the misfortune of the rich and famous because it makes them feel better about their own less than perfect lives.

Equity theory may also play a role in evaluating satisfaction in relationships. A balanced relationship where each partner contributes a fair share is more satisfying and happy (Cate & Lloyd, 1992). Fairness is always at the perceptual level, and so our evaluation of fairness depends on the quality of the relationship. If the partners are happy, the occasional inequity in contributions will be seen as a minor distraction. For unhappy relationships even minor discrepancies of contributions will contribute to dissatisfaction and conflict.

Cate & Lloyd (1992) also provide some practical ideas for creating lasting relationships. Marrying a little older for example, allows for better preparation and a better socioeconomic platform for marriage. Furthermore, they suggest we try to get over the infatuation stage and evaluate the prospective partners level of neuroticism and maturity because we all carry some baggage from past relationships, but some people's burdens impact negatively on intimacy. Thirdly, happiness is also somewhat dependent on getting out of the blaming game. We should give our partner the benefit of the doubt and be willing to attribute positive dispositions and intent, and reward all positive acts by word and deed. These steps may avoid the trap and cycle of misery that lead to dissolution of relationships that once promised intimacy.

8.13 Making real commitments

Commitment is discussed in the psychological literature from several perspectives. Can your partner make the commitment and is it for the long haul? There are three variables related to commitment (Rusbult, 1983). The first is the accumulation of all the rewards of the relationship. The rewarding aspects of a romantic relationship are by far the most important determinant of satisfaction (Cate, Lloyd, Henton, &Larson, 1982). The support we receive, sexual satisfactions, home security, adventure and novelty, are all-important rewards that contribute to lasting relationships.

The second variable concerns the temptations of alternative partners. This may decrease commitment. The fewer alternatives that are present the less likely that the relationship will flounder (White & Booth, 1991). When the partners are young there are more temptations and more alternatives, but as time passes there are fewer alternatives. If you see your relationship as the only one possible, and if the feeling is mutual, the relationship will be more satisfying and lasting. Finally, the investments we have made may determine commitment. If we have invested a great deal in our mutual history, children, home, common religion, we are likely to stay within the relationship. More committed relationships produce more interdependent lives where the focus is on the unit and not the individual (Agnew, Van Lange, Rusbult, & Langston, 1998). The more committed can more easily adjust to demands and stresses of life such as the arrival of a new child. Commitment also encourages forgiveness, the feeling that one should never let the sun set on a bad argument (Finkel, Rusbult, Kumashiro, & Hannon, 2002).

8.14 The moral commitment

The foregoing emphasizes the social psychological factors that encourage commitment. For many in permanent relationships, commitment refers to basic integrity. From a moral perspective when you commit to another person your word should mean something, and support for your partner is for the better or worse of life. For some, moral commitment is a social obligation. It is the right thing to do for the marriage and the family. That does not imply that a relationship built on such commitment is loveless, on the contrary moral commitment may allow greater security and happiness. For some couples, commitment is also reinforced by religious beliefs. They believe that marriage is a religious duty not to be taken lightly. Marriage for some is an existential commitment; there are some things in life that are meant to last in an ever-changing world.

8.15 The positive view of life and the beloved

Much research points to the negative effects of having children on the happiness of marriage partners (Myers, 2000a). The arrival of children creates new conditions as children demand the focus of parents, and the relationship suffers. Partners often fail to return to the pre-child happiness until they are again alone after their children leave home. However, those who fight for their intimacy find it rewarding (Aron, Norman, Aron, McKenna, & Heyman, 2000). The key to marital happiness is to overcome boredom by finding new and exciting things to do as a couple. We all have needs for rootedness, but also for new and novel experiences. Those couples that build occasional excitement into their relationship feel more satisfied (Gable, Reis, Impett, & Asher, 2004). However, it takes an effort to do something new and different, and fighting for intimacy is a life long struggle. What novel activities couples can bring into their lives depends on many factors including socioeconomic variables and age. In the end it may be the effort toward renewal that wins over our partners and keeps the flame of intimacy alive. Rewards, pleasure and novelty are the keys to long-lasting romance and satisfaction with love and life.

8.16 Idealizations, positive illusions, and commitment

Romantic partners who feel “totally” in love manifest unrealistic, but delightful illusions about their partner’s behaviors and qualities. In chapter 2 we discussed positive illusions and mental health. Do such positive illusions also contribute to satisfaction and enduring relationships? There is much to support that contention. Partners who have positive illusions can think of nothing negative about the beloved. With powerful positive illusions dominating our perceptions, we experience the behaviors of our partner as rewarding and feel stronger commitment to the relationship. Murray (1999) suggested that satisfaction, and stability of a relationship depended on overstating the positive qualities of the partner. Those in love look at the behavior and reactions of the partner in the most positive way, consistently giving the partner any benefit of doubt, or not allowing doubt in the first place. The idealization of romantic partners is an essential component in satisfaction of intimate relationships (Murray & Holmes, 1993; 1997;Neff & Karney, 2002).

With positive illusions we overestimate what is good and underestimate the negative. Remember the results of reciprocal liking! In a similar way, idealizing the partner produces mutual liking and more relationship satisfaction. Even when asked about the partner's greatest fault (Murray & Holmes, 1999), romantic participants were likely to refuse to accept the presence of any fault or turn it into a virtue. For example, if the partner was not ambitious, he was still a wonderful husband who helped around the house. If the partner did not express emotions, well it was because he felt so deeply, and expressed his feelings in other ways. So even the partner's emotions were idealized (Hawkins, Carrere, & Gottman, 2002). In a study where the partner rated how much positive affect was expressed in a discussion on conflict, satisfied romantic partners overestimated the positive expressions of their partners when compared to neutral judge's perceptions. In general, romantic couples that are happy see the interactions of their partner in a continuous positive way. There seems to be no substitute for happiness in couples, and it is as if a romantic partner can do no wrong. Having these positive illusions contributes to lasting relationships.

Even though half of all marriages in the US end in divorce, romantic illusions lead to the belief that one's own marriage will succeed. Most people are unrealistic on probability grounds, and think there is little or no chance for divorce in their future (Fowers, Lyons, Montel, & Shakel, 2001). We can also see positive illusions at work when participants were asked about the quality of their relationships and these outcomes are compared to ratings of those who knew them well, such as parents and roommates. The participants were primarily positive and saw fewer obstacles to success than did those who were intimate observers. The observers were more evenhanded and saw both the strengths as well as the problems in the relationship.

Positive illusions are aided by our faulty memory. Many people believe their relationship is getting better all the time (Frye & Karney, 2004). For example although women's satisfactions declined in a longitudinal study, the participants expressed beliefs that their current relationship was better than ever (Karney &

Coombs, 2000). It is of course very useful to longevity of relationships that we do not remember the bad times or believe those days were better than was actually the case. It is helpful to long-lasting marriages that couples see an unbroken path to an ever improving and more intimate relationship. The relationship bias is found in American, European and Asian cultures (Endo, Heine, & Lehman, 2000). Participants consistently rated their own relationships better when compared to those of the "average" students. These results together demonstrate the functional utility of unconditional positive regard. If we want to be successful in love, we must really love the beloved!

Summary

This essay covered the most significant relationships of human life from the initial attachments to long lasting commitments. We introduced evolutionary psychology in an attempt to understand the initial attachments of infants present in all societies and cultures. The examples of feral children in the literature and the absence of discernable human traits in these children support the idea that human traits are forged in the interaction with significant others. There is also much to suggest that early attachment forms the basis for later relationships. The inference from Harlow's studies is that social isolation is traumatic and results in abnormal development and adult personality. Humans have an even longer dependency period than the monkeys studied by Harlow, and need nurturing to survive. The bonding that occurs initially with the mother becomes the basis of all other bonding relationships.

If the need to belong is a biological drive, is that expressed in the universality of the mother-child relationship and romantic love? If the need to relate to other people is a biological drive, the need to belong should be satiable. When not sufficient the individual will reach out to establish new relationships; however, when sufficient there is no longer a motive to do so. Our relationships are essential to our sense of well-being and happiness. Those people who are deprived of supportive relations largely live unhappy lives, and isolation has negative consequences for health. Our relationship history defines largely who we are and the attributions we make.

The role of biology can be observed in the preferences of the two genders for qualities in the opposite sex. In all cultures women prefer men with material resources, and men prefer youth and beauty. Perhaps this finding could reflect the relative size differences between the two genders and the historical control of males over economic resources. On the other hand the evolutionary perspective suggests that these differences have a reproductive cause. There is no resolution of these varying interpretations, but the gender differences exist.

The experience of loneliness has many negative consequences. People may have an optimal number of relationships and still feel lonely. Perhaps the relationships are not satisfying some basic emotional needs for intimacy. We do know that those who live rich emotional lives are less dependent on others for satisfying emotional needs. There are those who are chronically lonely. Often that is related to the mobility and temporary nature of relationships due to movement, death, and life changes. Demographic variables may also play a role as the poor struggle with many forms of insecurity and have less time for relationships. Youth is a time of special danger of loneliness as biology demands attachments especially in this stage of life.

The initial attachment is with the mother; later in normal development attachment is expanded to include the father, other family members and friends. The caregiver's own sense of security and warmth is of signal importance to the infant's attachment style. If the infant is secure and feels the human warmth of its mother, a similar pattern can be expected in adult attachments. The infant attachment style is stable over the individual's lifetime, and those who were emotionally secure as infants will find it easier to develop similar healthy relationships as adults. Traumatic life events may also affect our ability to establish and maintain secure relationships. The death of a parent or divorce may produce lasting insecurity in the child. Secure attachments bring many benefits to the individual. Secure individuals bring out the best in others as they generally look for the positive even for negative behavior. Consequently there are fewer health problems and divorce among those who possess a basic sense of security.

Cultures produce somewhat different relationships and expectations. Some cultures are communal and put the interests of the family ahead of that of the individual. In these cultures resource distribution depend on the need of the family member at least as perceived by controlling heads of families. In individualist cultures the rights and needs of the individual is primary, and people generally look after number one or themselves. Some societies are authoritarian like the military, and emphasize status and the established hierarchy. In modern society in which individualistic culture dominates we see more emphasis on equality in resource distribution and outcomes. The question that couples seek to answer is, is the relationship fair.

Relational self-theory is based on the idea that prior relationships provide the framework for understanding our current attitudes and behaviors. If your current lover, boss or other significant person remind you of someone previously significant in your life, you may transfer the feeling you had from that previously significant person to the current relationship. Those who remind us of a positive relationship will have positive feelings transferred to the current relationship. Our past relationships may affect us at the automatic level and we may remain unaware of how these previous relationships affect our current thinking. Previous relationships form the basis of memories and social cognition. We also include family and close friends in our attributional biases, believing that the success of our beloved is due to personal dispositions, whereas failure in those close to us is thought to be caused by unfavorable environmental factors.

Liking someone is the start of relationships. In all its simplicity, we like those who are rewarding to us and we dislike those who are a burden. The literature supports the importance of some antecedents to liking; these include propinquity, similarity, and physical attraction. We tend to like those who live near us because propinquity provides the opportunity to meet, and repeated exposure creates feelings of familiarity. This is an optimistic finding from social psychology that suggests that many relationships are possible in a person's life given the opportunity. The mere exposure effect supports the idea that repeated exposure leads to liking as exposure creates feelings of safety and security. Proximity may mask another variable important to liking relationships, that of similarity, as we often live in social environments where people share common values, or other characteristics. Also long distance relationships are more difficult to maintain and therefore more costly. Similarity is a powerful variable in liking relationships. We marry those who are similar to us in social class, religion and values. The more similar we are to someone, the more we like the other person. Dating services are based on the idea that a good match is with someone who is similar in values, attitudes, and even physical appearance. The reason similarity is central to liking relationships is that it provides a common platform for understanding the other person and therefore promotes intimacy and trust. Of course it is also reassuring to have our values confirmed by another person. Again, the similarity may be caused by selectivity of the social environment which produces shared experiences and therefore bonding. Those who come from the same culture would have a large set of experiences and values in common not present to outsiders.

Nothing can beat reciprocal liking in eliciting positive feelings; we like those who like us. Reciprocal liking is even more powerful than similarity in producing liking toward someone. Personal traits are also important. The research supports the significance of personal warmth and competence in producing liking in most people. Most members of the sexes are attracted to the opposite sex. Do opposites attract? It seems that opposite attraction holds only for the sexual relationship. Only a few complementary personality traits affect attraction. Although society is moving toward more tolerance on different ethnic relationships, these changing attitudes may only reflect changing norms and may not hold for the individual's own family.

Physical attractiveness is a powerful antecedent to liking. There is in fact little difference between the genders, both like the physically attractive member of the opposite sex. It seems that physical attractiveness is the single most important variable in eliciting sexual desire and arousal. There are some gender differences. Women place greater importance on economic security and stability when considering marriage. They will therefore marry a less desirable male, or an older male, who possesses material resources. Evolutionary psychology would say that these gender differences exist for reproductive reasons. To form family, women must have stable partners. However, as society advances toward economic equality, both sexes place more importance on physical attractiveness.

The physically attractive have many social advantages. All societies subscribe to the "beautiful is good" norm. One consequence is the attribution of positive traits like competence to the physically attractive. It is no wonder they also experience more socio-economic success. Culture determines somewhat the features that are considered attractive. However, there are also universal traits considered attractive in all cultures. Faces that signal reproductive fitness and health are considered attractive in all societies. This lends support to the evolutionary perspective. Faces that typify the norm, and express bilateral symmetry also have universal appeal. From an evolutionary perspective these faces signal reproductive fitness.

In today's world the market place economy dominates in all aspects of culture and interpersonal interactions. Interpersonal attraction is also dominated by market ideas. The theories of interpersonal attraction emerged in western capitalist societies and reflect therefore common social ideas of rewards, costs, and fairness. Social exchange theory states that relationship liking depends on outcomes that is defined as the rewards minus the costs of a relationship. The theory suggests that relationships have rewards, but also costs and the rewards must be larger for the relationship to be lasting and satisfying. Our satisfaction may also to some degree depend on past relationships that serve as a comparison level. Equity theory states that contentment depends on equity, the give and take in a relationship. Essentially equality and fairness is what governs relationship satisfaction from this perspective. In modern times this perspective in intimate relations leads to tiresome negotiations, issues perhaps better solved by consensus about division of responsibilities.

Theories of interpersonal attraction seem more valid for functional relationships one might find at work or school. Western-based societies are more based on exchange, equity and market economies, whereas societies in Asia are more communally based. In communal relations the outcome for the individual depends on need. Also in close relationships, topics dealing with emotional support and satisfaction are relevant, and altruistic behaviors are expected.

Relationship satisfaction depends also on other factors. First of all the level of investment in the relationship in terms of children, common history, and economic achievements may affect stability. Secondly, what is the level of commitment, and do the partners have alternatives and other prospects? In all these cases, intimate relationships are dominated by the long view, and not just the immediate reward. Thirdly, self-disclosure is an essential factor in building trust and intimate relations. When self-disclosure is reciprocated, such behavior leads to intimacy. Self-disclosure is perhaps more important in individualist societies, as in collectivist societies couples are more inhibited. Women disclose more within same sex relationships, and men are more cautious. Men are more likely to share risk-taking experiences, whereas women will share concerns about appearance.

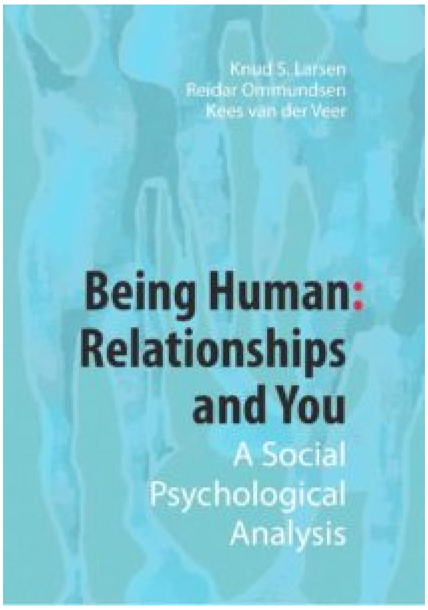
Romantic love differs from friendship by its emphasis on sexual interest, by the fascination and infatuation with the partner, and the exclusiveness of the relationship. Such relationships are emotional and exciting. Men and women experience intimacy in similar ways, but women are more likely to express the feelings that lead to intimacy. Romantic love can be defined as intimacy combined with passionate feelings. When couples also feel commitment there is the basis for lasting relationships. Having a successful romantic relationship is basic to feelings of well-being and health.

However, we can observe by the reported divorce statistics that all is not well in marriages. This discontentment appears a tragic commentary on our inability to adjust to changing gender roles as society moves toward more equality. Central to many relationship failures is a preoccupation with fairness and endless negations requiring change in partners. Personality also matters in discontentment. The neurotic individual's preoccupation with negative emotions kills intimate relations. The neurotics bad past experiences influence current expectations, and cause the neurotic to act with strong emotion to any conflict. Stress as represented by socio-economic factors may produce discontentment. The poor are struggling with many forms of insecurity and have little time for intimate relations. Likewise the young are at risk for divorce as lacking the maturity, and struggling with many stresses.

Conflict in relationships comes furthermore about when we interfere with a person's preferences, or frustrate important goals. The behavior of the partner may also have an effect. Drug abuse for example kills the possibility of intimate relations. Attributional blame is also toxic, along with endless criticisms, denying the existence of problems, and displaying the emotion of contempt toward the partner. Breaking emotional ties is extremely painful. The party that is least responsible suffers more unhappiness. What can be done? If we believe in social exchange and equity, we can increase rewards and seek to develop more fairness in the relationship. Presumably the more rewarding and fair our relationship, the more happy. We can also just love more.

Being Human. Chapter 4: Social Cognition: How We Think About

The Social World



Every day we are confronted with situations requiring judgment and decisions. At times, in emergencies, rapid decisions are required allowing little time for reflection. In other situations, the outcome matters greatly and motivates us to carefully evaluate the judgment and consequences of our decision. Social cognition is a fundamental area of social psychology, and refers to how people utilize information in making decisions. Specifically, we will attend to how we select the information, how we interpret the information, and how we organize it to respond to the decision making demand.

In situations involving police or other emergency teams there is little time to evaluate. The police may have fractions of seconds to decide if a suspect is holding a gun or some harmless object and to subsequently decide either to fire to kill, or to pursue another line of action. How does a police officer make such decisions? There are those who would argue that in the case of suspects the police use race to determine whether a suspect is dangerous or not (Singer, 2002). For example, in Cincinnati, USA the police killed 16 black suspects in six years, while no whites were killed in similar circumstances. It seems reasonable to assume that prejudice played a role in these life or death situations in the United States. In other words, faulty decision-making is often a result of rapid response requirements based on often false social stereotypes. We have more to say about stereotypes or cognitive schemas later in this chapter.

On the more positive side, automatic thinking can also save lives. One of the authors recently had an accident, which caused 5 broken ribs, a punctured lung, and the loss of his spleen. He can recall every detail of what happened during the accident, and the efforts made to save his life. The emergency crew went on automatic thinking as soon as they saw his injuries, belting his body in several places, providing oxygen, and after questions about any allergies they started pain medication. In the emergency room there were similar very crisp questions as the surgeon ruled out other problems and directed attention to the needed surgery. This surgeon had a well-established memory of similar injuries and proceeded rapidly to address the injuries, and stabilized patient's vital signs. As time was of the essence, these professionals were on automatic pilot, as they took steps to administer needed medical services. Automatic decision is rapid and carried to conclusion without a great deal of extended thought and reflection. In this type of social cognition people act as if without thinking, responding to internalized memory and experiences (Bargh & Ferguson, 2000; Sloman, 1996).

There are other occasions when the situation demands a longer and more deliberate evaluation process. How to choose a life partner, what occupation to adopt, what philosophy or ideology to believe in, are best decided on thorough and very careful evaluation. By thinking through all the issues, evaluating potential consequences of our decisions, we can make better decisions, resulting in more contentment over the long run. Although automatic thinking seems to dominate so much of social behavior, we do have the capacity to override the process, and analyze the situation slowly and deliberately.

However, neither type of thinking is error free as important information is often missing. Even powerful nations like the US make basic errors despite heavy investments in intelligence. We can observe that it is not information alone that determines inferences, but also ideology. Ideology allows the individual or group to incorporate and accept information. What comes to mind is the obvious fiasco of going to war in Iraq based on the assumption that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. The intelligence services provided accurate information, that there were no weapons of mass destruction program in Iraq. However, since the decision to go to war had already been made, this inconvenient information was not incorporated in the decision-making. At other times, of course, the information we have is not only inconvenient, but also incomplete, ambiguous or contradictory. How we make decisions given the incompleteness of information is the basic question addressed in social cognition.

1. The process of making inferences from our own experiences

If our inference processes were in fact unbiased, we could all arrive at judgments that reflect reality. Unfortunately, drawing inferences is not such an even handed process, but rather one that is often dominated by errors and biases where we depart from logic and accuracy. To arrive at any inference is a process containing several interrelated cognitions. First, to make any judgment we must gather information. If you are trying to decide whether to work for a certain company you may want to know something about the company's outlook on their workers, on pay and benefits, on vacation allowances, and in the long term, retirement plans. Some of this information will be more important than other knowledge about the company. For example, if you really need a job now, and you are young, retirement may seem a topic of little interest or concern. Part of drawing an inference therefore is to decide what information is useful, and then try to integrate that information into some judgment or decision.

1.1 Some sources of bias

Actual information gathering is, however, subject to several sources of bias that may affect your judgment. All of us have incorporated expectations into our knowledge base. You have learned from friends or others you trust that this company is very good to its workers. Yet, during your job interview you get the impression that the company has little concern for the well being of its employees, but you refrain from checking the truth of your impression. Prior expectations may cause us to draw wrong inferences (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). We tend to gather and attend to information that is consistent with our expectations. We are less likely to gather information that is inconsistent with what we expect, and because of that bias are therefore more likely to draw inaccurate inferences. Since a person is less likely to gather inconsistent information, prior expectations will bias the information gathering. Prior expectations may cause the individual to completely ignore any contradictory information, or at least to be skeptical of the accuracy of inconsistent information. People favor information that supports what they expect and what they want to believe (Ditto, Scepansky, Munro, Apanovitch, & Lockhardt, 1998).

Often our inferences are based on samples that are small or not representative. It is of course not possible to talk to everyone in the company where you seek employment, but if you talk to only a couple of people it is not likely that useful information will be obtained. In many cases that does not prevent people from making inferences anyway. We utilize what we know, even if that knowledge may be misleading. (Nisbett & Kunda, 1985). Today we live in a world in which statistics can describe just about any aspect of human life. The young person looking for employment can probably look up the company on the Internet and learn much that is useful. For example how profitable is the company, how stable is the management, are jobs secure or not. Here again we can observe a bias that seems characteristic of humans. Although statistics tend to be objectively based on averages or totals (and therefore more accurate), this information is frequently discarded in favor of anecdotal stories that emphasize information about specific persons or happenings. For example, the statistics about the company may show that they pay very low average salaries, but you have learned that an individual hired by the company managed to get himself promoted to a high position in just three years. Which source will be more powerful in your inferences about the company? Research suggests that the anecdotal information has more influence on judgments (Beckett & Park, 1995).

Another source of bias is the differential weighing given to negative information. More significance is placed on negative as compared to positive information, and it weighs more heavily when decisions are made (Taylor, 1991;Pratto & John, 1991). Illusionary correlations may also produce a bias in inferences. If our prior expectations suggest that two variables should go together they are often seen as correlating, whether that is factual or not. We have stereotypes about minority groups and violence for example. While there may be a little truth to some social stereotypes they never help us understand individual behavior. A minority individual may or may not fit the stereotype, hence illusionary correlations produce inaccurate inferences.

How decisions are framed may also influence judgments. Here the research points to the most basic factor in social cognition; i.e., are the decisions framed in terms of potential losses or gains? People become very cautious if alternatives are framed in terms of potential losses, but far more likely to take risks if framed in terms of potential gains (Kahnema & Tversky, 1982). If you are in charge of hiring our imaginary prospective employee you would emphasize the stability of the company, and a career that can only produce gains, not the fact that a third of the employees leaves the company each year. (Rothman & Salovey, 1997). In other words emphasizing the positive will make it more likely that the employee will take a risk on the company and accept employment.

1.2 Mood and emotion

Many of the errors we make derive from our commitment to evaluative beliefs. If we have a commitment to a particular idea, ideology or religion, then that emotional commitment may override factual information that is contrary to these evaluative beliefs. Emotion overrides rational decision making many times, particularly if the evaluative beliefs are of great significance and serve as a source of psychological balance. Of course emotions have also a very important role to play in accurate decision-making. Emotions may produce warning signals when a risky decision contains potential disaster. More and more researchers are coming to the conclusion that emotion and cognition go hand in hand, and provide complementary information (Gray, 2004).

Moods are more temporary, but can still have great influence on the decisions. When we are in a good mood we tend to get along better with others, and our inferences are affected. Even though moods may not last long, we can still make decisions in these temporary conditions, which have long lasting effects (Forgas & Ciarrochi, 2002). When people are depressed they tend to be accurate in making pessimistic predictions about the future, but less accurate in anticipating positive events (Shrauger, Mariano, & Walter, 1998). A mood of sadness may impair accuracy since it slows and promotes a more deliberate information processing when the situation requires a more immediate response (Ambady & Gray, 2002).

2. Biases in information presented firsthand and secondhand

We receive information from different sources, which provide bases for social judgment. Some of our information comes directly from our own interaction in society and our own experiences. Our culture, educational system, prevalent ideologies provide filters for direct experience. The discussion so far has already shown that there is unfortunately no one-to-one relationship between our experiences and accuracy in social cognition. What distortion occurs in memory that derives from our own firsthand experiences, and what distortions derive from others in society?

*2.1 Believing everyone else is better informe*d

Most students will have attended a class in which the professor asked, after a particular difficult lecture, if anyone had any questions. Probably some students had questions, but since no one raised his hand they falsely assumed that they were deficient in knowledge since all the other students had understood the material. Afraid to show their ignorance the individual student along with everyone else therefore, did not ask any questions. This scenario is called "pluralistic ignorance" (Miller & McFarland, 1991).

It seems clear that underlying this distortion of information is the fear of rejection by teacher or classmates or not fitting into prevalent classroom social norms. Other researchers (Klofas & Toch, 1982) found similar results for prison guards who typically operate in a macho tough culture and therefore falsely assume that the other guards have no sympathy for the prisoners. Another study demonstrated pluralistic ignorance in drinking behavior (Prentice & Miller, 1993). One university had a culture of abusing alcohol, and the students generally assumed that this met with universal approval, when in fact their private opinions often clashed with this norm.

2.2 Biases in memory

Memory is not just a register of past events. In fact memory is an active process of cognition, which often changes what is remembered in significant ways. Again our wishes and desires predominate so what is remembered is what we want to remember more than what actually happened. For one, we never remember everything about an event so memory is an underestimate of what happened. More significantly, however, we sometimes remember things that never happened (Conway & Ross, 1984). These phenomena seriously distort judgment based on memory. In recent years there has been a great upheaval in psychology over the phenomena known as “false memories”. Typically these memories are about traumatic events, which happened early in life, are then forgotten, and later retrieved under therapy. In one very famous case a young woman, Eileen Franklin, accused her father of sexually abusing and murdering her best friend. Her father was sentenced to prison and served 6 years before it was established beyond any doubt that Eileen’s “recovered” memory was false. Still it remained her firm belief that her father was guilty. Many other cases of falsely accusing someone of sexual abuse are now part of the legal case history in the United States, and show convincingly the fallibility of human memory (Loftus, 1993).

Some memories are of events that occurred under dramatic circumstances. For example many people remember where they were exactly when significant events occurred in national or world history. Often even these apparently vivid memories show significant discrepancies from earlier memories of the actual event (Neisser & Harsch, 1992).

We all have ideas of how things should be, beliefs consistent with our beliefs and ethics. Research has shown that ideas about how things should be often change memories of how things were (Ross, 1989). In the US we have seen dramatic shifts in racial attitudes over the past decades. For example, the educational system used busing of students from minority neighborhoods to more integrated schools as a means of overcoming the negative effects of racism. In the early years, there was a great deal of resistance to busing among white students.

However, over time their opinions changed and when they were asked to recall their earlier attitudes results showed considerable distortions in their memory in favor of the new modified opinions (Goethals & Reckman, 1973).

2.3 Information we obtain from other

On most of the large-scale issues of life we have little first-hand information, but rather must rely on others for our opinions. This information too is filtered through our belief systems, and through those who are the sources of information. How accurate is this information? Obviously we can never get a complete picture since describing an event in detail takes too much time. Therefore shortcuts are employed in order to convey that which in the eyes of the communicator is most important. This process of conveying information of the more important or relevant elements is called sharpening. At the same time irrelevant or less interesting information is left out, a process referred to as leveling.

Most of us have never met the president, the queen or the king of our country, or other famous or notorious people. Yet, that does not prevent us from having opinions about these public personalities. We develop our opinions from the views of those we respect, members of our family, television, and other news media. Again, we engage in a process of sharpening and leveling of information in the interest of a consistent image of the other person. Research shows, however, that such second hand derived opinions tend to the extreme. We are stronger in our dislike, and more flattering in our positive evaluations, than supported by our information. For example the opinion polls on president Bush show that currently he is the most unpopular president in the history of the US. Not so long ago (in historical terms) he was very popular. However, ratings not based on personal experience like opinion polls tend toward more extreme views. This tendency toward extreme views based on second hand information has been found in a number of studies (Gilovich, 1987; Inman, Reichl, & Baron, 1993).

2.4 Slanted views provided by the media

One of the major reasons for distortions is the role played by the media. To a large extent television in the western world is primarily mindless entertainment. Therefore the more exaggerated the story the more likely it will be included in the evening news. The news focuses especially on the negative and on catastrophic events. These happenings should of course be included in the overall picture of the world, but other news such as heroic efforts to help others or stories depicting goodwill are often excluded in favor of these distortions. In short the need to entertain a population, which is thought to have a very short attention span, supports the emphasis on dramatic and scary events, which reflects only a small portion of behavior or events in a country.

This has an effect on how people view the world. When you are bombarded every day with bad news, wars, murders, rapes, is it any wonder that many people become scared and believe that the world is a very dangerous place? The bias toward bad news in fact creates a world that is not realistic. For example, research shows that in television 80 percent of all crime is violent, whereas in the real world only 20 percent can be categorized as such (Windhauser, Seiter, & Winfree, 1991). Going to the movies presents an even more distorted view of the world as the emphasis is again on the violent, dramatic, and negative (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980).

One consequence is that many people believe the world is more dangerous than it really is. A distorted picture of crime produces in people a heightened fear of victimization and insecurity. Although the murder rate dropped a little in the United States in the period from 1990-1998, television shows focusing on homicide increased during the same period by 473 percent (Center for Media and Public Affairs, 2000). Some studies show a relationship between the number of hours a person watches distorted television, and the fear of victimization (Doob & McDonald, 1979), especially by those who live in neighborhoods where crime is present.

2.5 Distortions based on ideology

There are those in society who have a vested interest in providing a slanted story. The objective is not so much in telling the truth as it is about persuading a target population of the justice of a cause. Social ideologies often lead the media and educational system to accentuate certain features of a story while excluding other important aspects. By suppressing inconvenient information an attempt is made to support certain beliefs about reality in the world. All societies in the world have such ideologies operating. Although many would proclaim the presence of press freedom in the Western world, there is much information that never sees the light of day. For example, few people in the US have any information about Cuba, except the very predictable condemnations one hears from time to time from the government. There is no information on Cuba's achievements such as eradicating illiteracy, providing medical care, and other systems of social security. These ideological distortions are not carried out innocently, but are the consequences of deliberate policy and the news media conform to these expectations.

A fundamental question is why do people consume so much negative information? Why is there a preference (which we can observe by the popularity of television programming) for the catastrophic and negative news and shows? Does it make the individual feel better when he sees violence, but can say, “thank god it is not me”? Of course negative information may have some survival value. If we are presented with real dangers we are more likely to survive if we attend to these aspects of our environment. Perhaps such survival needs makes people more vigilant to potential threats (Rozin & Royzman, 2001).

Is information equally useful regardless of how or when we obtain the intelligence? Research by social psychologists shows that it matters greatly in what order the information is received. Also, even slight variation in the actual wording can have a great impact on people’s responses. The cold war produced mindless conformity in Western countries during which one’s own side was considered the repository of all that was good and praiseworthy, and the other side was just evil. Should it surprise us therefore that US respondents had very different views on whether reporters from socialist countries should be admitted to the US to report on the news, or whether US reporters should be admitted to socialist countries to do the same. In fact only 36 percent of US respondents thought that reporters from socialist countries should be admitted to the US, whereas 66 percent thought the socialist countries should admit western reporters. Later, very different results were obtained by merely changing the order of the questions. If the respondents were asked if US reporters should be given free access in socialist countries 90 percent said yes. Since that question was asked first it put some pressure on the respondents to be consistent and 73 percent agreed that reporters from socialist countries should have similar privileges. Still a lower number, but higher than the 36 percent who responded favorably when asked first for press freedom for socialist reporters in the US (Hyman & Sheatsley, 1950). This, and other studies (Haberstroh, Oyserman, Schwarz, Kuhnen, & Li, 2002) show that the order in which information or questions are presented can have a powerful effect on the respondent’s judgment.

Some research has shown a primacy effect; i.e., the information that is presented first is most influential. Other studies have demonstrated a recency effect; i.e., the information presented last is most powerful. The studies do not permit any overall conclusion other than it matters what order information and questions are presented. For an overview of which (primacy or recency) is most effective see Fiske & Taylor (1991).

Consequently, it is important to keep this in mind if one is developing a survey. Even if all precautions are taken by, for example, guaranteeing anonymity, the results can still vary widely. Those who have a vested interest in manipulating public opinion know that if the contents of the question are varied slightly, there will be a different result. Opponents in a political debate know how to spin the questions in order to obtain a desired result. One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter.

Some descriptions are key to an overall stereotype. In another classical investigation Asch (1946) showed that just including the words warm or cold in a person description containing many other trait words as well would completely alter the perception of the person described. Obviously we must be very careful in framing questions, knowing that the order asked, and even slight variations in the content can influence the outcome in significant ways.

2.6 Does motivation effect inferences?

We have seen that people often produce information that is largely self-serving, and develop inferences where the relationship of beliefs is coincidental to the truth. We want to believe in what we think will produce personal happiness, and we will take whatever steps necessary to keep incongruent information out. For example even though divorce rates are approaching 50 percent, most of those who marry do not believe these statistics are applicable to their relationship. In general we persist in believing that only good things will happen, and that bad situations can be avoided (Kunda, 1987).

We might think that if we were highly motivated we would make more careful decisions (Pelham & Neter, 1995). In general the results show that motivation is only of benefit if the decision is easy. If the judgment required is difficult, accuracy in decision-making decreases.

Studies have shown the ability to suppress feelings in various circumstances. You want to forget about a painful relationship, or some traumatic circumstance. As soon as the mind becomes aware of the unpleasant thoughts it can reduce the impact on consciousness by thinking of something else more pleasant (Foster & Liberman, 2001). Some studies also show that suppressing thoughts has a cost attached. Thought suppression requires a very hard effort that not only involves cognition, but indeed physiology as well. Some studies have shown a negative effect on the immune system through chronic thought suppression (Harris, 2001).

In general social inference is at best an imperfect process where we often make errors in favor of what we desire and want, rather than incorporating some standard of objective reality. Still, without the stereotypes and schemas that moderate social cognition, the complexity of information processing would overcome the average person. It is necessary that we remain aware of the cognitive pitfalls.

3. Automatic thinking and our use of schemas

As we have already noted not all social cognition involves careful evaluation. Often we react rather automatically to social stimulus as if we have ready-made responses stored in our memory. Automatic thinking is largely unconscious, and occurs without intentional effort (Bargh & Ferguson, 2000). The ready-made responses are called schemas; referring to mental structures we possess which function to organize our knowledge about social stimuli. These mental structures influence what information we attend to, what we think about, and what we store in long-term memory (Taylor & Crocker, 1981). Schema is a generic term for knowledge structures (e.g. assumptions or preconceptions) that define other people, what we are ourselves, and our social roles in society. What is a student like, what are the characteristics of a teacher or professor? Do students desire knowledge, and are professors those who like to help?

In each case a schema includes all our knowledge about the social category, as well as situations that are common. What is your schema for attending a football match in The Netherlands? Does it include noisy behavior by fans, and perhaps acting out by young people when the national team wins an important game? How do fans behave when The Netherlands wins an important match over archrivals? Are certain expectations in your mind part of your schema about football and fan behavior? What is your schema about the opposite sex? Does it include gender specific behavior, for example expecting more emotionality by females? Are males expected in your schema to be more assertive? In these and all cases we have stored schemas based on our past experience and what we have learned from others.

If we did not have schemas our lives would require evaluation of each new situation. Can you imagine the confusion of going shopping to buy products without schemas? Perhaps there are a variety of toothpastes. How can you choose one? If you have a schema your thinking would automatically be oriented based on previous trials or perhaps by advertisement. Without these mental structures not only would shopping be a long and painful experience, but also very confusing as a person has to examine all alternatives. Schemas therefore direct our attention in specific ways, and structure our memory for future use (Brewer & Nakasmura, 1984).

3.1 The function of schemas

Schemas are used to complete information that may be lacking in a specific situation. How do you expect people to behave who are members of specific national or racial groups? If you lived in the US you might have schemas of Black people that include your beliefs about their propensity for violent behavior. If you lived in The Netherlands, Norway or some other European country you may have schemas about immigrants that also include potential violence. Hence when you meet someone of a minority background research suggest that you selectively attend to cues suggesting hostile behavior. All cultures have deeply rooted stereotypes not based on personal experience.

The reason we have schemas is that they allow us to complete needed information prior to interaction. Having schemas gives you some clue on how to behave toward a given social group, or how to behave in a given role (like that of a student). Our schemas may of course be prejudicial, and have little to do with social reality. Still schemas are enduring because we want to believe what we want to believe, the truth be damned. However, without schemas our world would be a giant buzzing beehive with no order or direction. Schemas are important because when we are confronted with a new situation we can understand it better – or so we feel – from our stored knowledge of similar situations. They help us process information more efficiently, and help us understand what part of the situation we must attend to, and what is of less or little importance.

Schemas influence memory, what and how we remember a particular situation. In one study the participants were asked to watch a videotape of a husband and wife having dinner together (Cohen, 1981). Half of the students were told that the woman in the videotape was a librarian, the other half that she was a waitress. Subsequently the participants were asked to list what they remembered of the interaction. Interestingly, when the woman was described as a librarian the participants in the study “remembered” her drinking wine, whereas when she was described as a waitress she was seen drinking beer. In other words memories were influenced by the participant’s stereotypes of people in these two roles. What this and other studies show is that behavior consistent with a preexisting schema is remembered better and enjoys an advantage when it comes to recall (Carli, 1999; Zadny & Gerard, 1974).

3.2 Social stimuli and preexisting schemas

Based on our own experience and that of others we all carry schemas as part of our interpretive mental arsenal. How can these schemas be activated by social stimuli allowing for more efficient judgment and decision-making? One of the significant factors, which determine schema activation, is the person’s expectation in a given situation. If a police officer encounters a Black person in a dark alley is it his expectation that he is confronting a criminal? If so that will activate schemas already existing in the mind of the police officer, and any abrupt or threatening movement by the minority person could lead to an unjustified shooting. Such events have occurred repeatedly (Bargh & Ferguson, 2000; Sloman, 1996). These are all examples of automatic thinking where the minority person was perceived as threatening and the officers opened fire based on their preexisting schemas. As we have seen, some situations require rapid response, and in the US this frequently means shoot first and ask questions later.

Schemas are frequently applied in gender relations to help interpret what to expect from the other gender. For insecure people perceived threat may be part of their schemas. If a threat is perceived the individual will be less likely to take the risk necessary to build intimate relationships. One consequence of this schema is the greater likelihood of living a lonely life. Many studies have demonstrated the ability of expectations to elicit specific schemas which then serve to guide subsequent information processing (Hirt, MacDonald, & Erikson, 1995; Stangor, & McMillan, 1992).

Another critical factor leading to schema activation is similarity between the social stimulus and the preexisting schema. You turn on the television and see a football match in progress. If you are a fan you have seen many matches before, perhaps even by the teams featured. Consequently you possess schemas about the teams, the individual players, and the likely outcome of the encounter. In other words the features of a particular situation, a sporting event, a family gathering, or some other social happening will advise you on what schemas to enlist, and how to interpret what you are observing (Holyoak & Thagard, 1995; Spellman & Holyoak, 1992). The recency of schemas also leads to activation. If a schema has been employed recently it is more readily available, and therefore more likely to be activated given minimal stimuli. The importance of recent activation has been demonstrated in several studies (Ford & Kruglanski, 1995; Herr, 1986; Todorov & Bargh, 2002).

The importance of a schema determines to some extent activation. Probably every situation is capable of eliciting a number of schemas. Sometimes misapplication occurs as the same situation may elicit different schemas. War related schemas have affected US policies over the past several generations. One schema derived from the surrender to Nazi provocation prior to the Second World War. That schema leads people and decision makers to say, "We must stand up to dictators". Another schema is the quagmire that the American war in Vietnam brought to US forces, and the desire not to repeat that experience. Politicians are constantly evoking schemas of both events in order to support or oppose a particular war related policy. Which of these two schemas do you think American decision makers employed with respect to the Iraq war? It seems clear that the war in Iraq took place regardless of contrary evidence that there were no weapons of mass destruction being produced. Recent reviews of the pretexts for the war showed without doubt that the reasons given for going to war were false. The only rationale left for that war was based on "we must stand up to dictators", the schema of World War II. Thus the past has long arms that affect much of what happens today and in the future. Research has shown that it is not difficult to elicit either of the two war schemas with consequences for decision making (Gilovich, 1981).

When the situation is important it is more likely that several schemas are brought into play, and the individual may evaluate longer and make more careful and complex decisions. Research shows that when the outcome is important, and when some individual's accountability is at stake the inferences produced are more complex and based on several schemas (Chaiken, 1980; Tetlock & Boettger, 1989).

Of course we do not all respond in the same manner to stimuli. There are always individual differences present, and the same stimuli may elicit different schemas. Some people are quite comfortable with ambiguity whereas others become very anxious unless situations are clearly defined. Differences in need for structure affects the need to create schemas. Intolerance of ambiguity requires that the person has in hand more or less ready-made responses. In short, those who do not tolerate ambiguity are more likely to rely on cognitive structures, whereas those with high tolerance deal with complicated situations with less reliance on schemas (Bar-Tal, Kishon-Rabin, & Tabak, 1997; Neuberg, Judice, & West, 1997; Chui, Morris, Hong, & Menon, 2000).

Is consciousness of stimuli necessary for activation of the schema? Can schemas get primed for action even if the individual is unconscious of the presence of the stimuli? A pioneering study (Bargh & Pietromonaco, 1982) showed that even when stimulus words were presented too rapidly to register, they still could affect the elicitation of specific schemas. Even when the stimulus is subliminal, below the threshold of awareness, the stimulus still functions to prime specific mental structures. This finding has been supported by many other studies (Debner & Jacoby, 1994; Draine & Greenwald, 1998; Ferguson, Bargh, & Nayak, 2005; Klinger, Burton, & Pitts, 2000).

3.3 Cultural differences

We shall in this book continuously apply the cultural concept of interdependent and independent societies outlined in chapter 2, as they have applications in a variety of situations and play a role in many social psychological constructs. Westerners and East Asians vary in how much they depend on the situation and on contextual information to come to conclusions. In general East Asians are more likely to rely on situational cues and environmental factors to explain behavior. Westerners are more likely to attribute behavior to dispositional causes; i.e., behavior is largely a function of the individual's personality and mental structures. East Asians explain events by pointing to the context and the importance of the situation. The individualistic culture in the West predisposes people to attribute blame or success to the individual and thus ignore the social context. The thinking of East Asians seems more complete as attention is paid to the whole social environment, whereas Westerners focus on the acting individual (Ji, Peng & Nisbett, 2000).

Our schemas are to a large extent a reflection of our culture. What is important or significant in a culture is committed to memory, and the resulting schemas are ready for use in daily life. In western cultures there are new schemas related to developments in technology. In rural regions of Africa existing schemas may have to do with the local culture, and farming or cattle transactions. In one early study an interviewer compared what a Scottish settler and a local Bantu herdsman remembered from a complicated cattle sale (Bartlett, 1932). The Scottish settler remembered little and had to consult his records for specifics, whereas the Bantu herdsman could produce from memory a variety of data such as how many cattle were sold and for how much. One would draw the conclusion that since cattle transactions are a central part of Bantu economy they have developed excellent schemas for these cultural relevant data. In all cultures people are faced with a vast amount of information. Our schemas help us reduce this complexity to manageable proportions, to allow for efficient cognition and decision-making. Schemas are therefore a form of automatic thinking.

Schemas are based on the past but are used to predict the future. In the west prediction of the future is based on continuity. In general the world is seen to continue to move in the same direction it currently moves. East Asians on the other hand emphasize change. The Tao (the way) is an Asian symbol that views the world as being in one of two states at any given moment, always changing. The yin and yang getting better or worse, and stronger or weaker, are dualities that emerge from Taoist thinking. These ideas should predispose East Asians to think that current events are likely to change course, rather than staying on track in the current direction. For example if asked whether a dating couple will continue to date, Americans are likely to say yes (continue course), East Asians thought is less likely. In estimating economic growth rates for the world economy or likely cancer rates, Americans overwhelming believe that current trends will continue whereas Chinese are more likely to think they will reverse course (Ji, Nisbet, & Su, 2001).

3.4 The use of racial stereotypes and schemas

We have mentioned racial stereotypes before. A number of studies have demonstrated the presence of racial stereotypes and how they affect perception. In one study participants would repeatedly see a gun in the hand of a minority person when the individual was just holding a tool (Payne, 2001). In a study of video games the participants were asked to press a button saying shoot if the individual in the video had a gun, and do not shoot if he did not. The results showed that the participants were more likely to pull the trigger when the stimulus person in the video was Black, and whether or not a gun was present (Correll, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2002).These errors in perception are obviously based on schemas that Black people are violent. Our culture contains very persuasive schemas that link race and violence. These are examples of automatic thinking derived from society. Another example of the cultural direction of thinking were the different reactions to the publishing of cartoons of Mohammed in Denmark in 2006. In a variety of Muslim societies there was an automatic call for death for those who were deemed guilty of offense, which from a different cultural perspective seemed absurd.

In summary, schemas provide certain advantages in the psychological economy of the individual. They help us process enormous amounts of information. Otherwise we would be overwhelmed by the sheer complexity of our world. Schemas also help us recall information, information that is consistent with the schema as well as inconsistent information (Corneille, Huart, Becquart, & Bredart, 2004). We have already seen what might happen to delay shopping if we did not have schemas about products in the supermarket. One function of these mental structures therefore is to speed up processing. Often, schemas assist us in making automatic inferences. Having gender related schemas means that we have a starting point for interaction, and do not need to start over each time we meet someone of the opposite sex. On the whole therefore schemas assist us in interpreting situations and people, and may especially be helpful with ambiguous situations where information is limited.

There are obviously also disadvantages in the use of schemas. Many errors occur as we saw in the case of racial stereotypes. In general schemas lead to simplification resulting at times in wrong interpretations. To that we may add that once present schemas are difficult to change. Since they serve psychological security by making thinking automatic and efficient, we are reluctant to get rid of these ideas, even when they are misleading. People will believe what they are prepared to believe and what they want to believe.

3.5 The self-fulfilling prophecy

We have many schemas, some of which actually become true, because our behavior elicits the expected responses from others. Rosenthal and Jacobson completed the most famous study on what was called the self-fulfilling prophecy in 1968. They initially administered an IQ test to students in an elementary school. Subsequently they returned and identified some of the students as "bloomers", i.e., some of the students were identified to the teachers as scoring so high that they were sure to "bloom" over the following academic year. In actual fact those identified as "bloomers" were just a random sub-sample, and therefore in no way different from the other students. The only way they differed had to be in the minds of the teachers who were told of their intellectual, but bogus academic gifts. Keep in mind that the students were not given any feedback, nor were the parents told of the results of the test. In other words an expectation schema was created in the teachers minds about this subgroup, which in actual fact was randomly chosen and had no particular gift. Could the mere fact that the teachers now had new and higher expectations (schemas) affect the students in some way to actually improve their IQ scores? That is what happened. The students labeled “bloomers” showed significantly greater gains in IQ scores when compared to the rest of the students. Similar results have been replicated in other studies (Blank, 1993; Jussim, 1991; Smith, Jussim, & Eccles, 1999).

What happened? Did the teachers just decide to give all their efforts to helping “bloomers” while disregarding the other students? That was clearly not the case in any conscious way. Rather the teachers had incorporated a schema about the “bloomers” abilities, and thus any differential treatment was a consequence of automatic thinking. Is it not amazing? There was no conscious attempt to treat the selected students differently, but that is what happened. This differential, but unconscious treatment was also found in other studies (Brophy, 1983; Rosenthal, 1994; Snyder, 1984). It appeared from analysis that the differential treatment included a warmer emotional atmosphere, more personal attention, and support. The teachers also challenged the “bloomers” to a greater extent with more difficult material, and provided better feedback. The teachers also included more opportunities for bloomers to participate in class. The self fulfilling prophecy operates by first creating an expectation schema, i.e. what is another person like, which in turn influences how the person is treated, which causes the person to act consistently with the original expectation.

Such self-fulfilling prophecies may have very negative consequences. Although girls initially perform better than boys in grade school, as time goes by girls begin to fall behind boys on standard tests (Reis & Park, 2001; Stumpf & Stanley, 1998). There are those who would argue that this change is due to different information processing by male and female brains (Geary, 1996; Witelson, 1992). However, it seems more likely that the change occurs as a result of lower expectations for girls by teachers, and perhaps also in the home, thus establishing a self fulfilling prophecy (Feingold, 1996; Hyde, 1997). If teachers are asked who are their most gifted students they mention boys much more frequently, and parents too believe their boys are brighter (Jussim & Eccles, 1992; Raety, Vaenskae, Kasanen, & Kaerkkaeinen, 2002). Are the significant people in the lives of girls treating them differently in ways that affect the self-concept, thus leading to lower levels of achievement? Yes, although it is not a conscious process, but a matter of expectations built into automatic thinking with long-range consequences.

Perhaps we also damage boys by having unfounded expectations, which nevertheless produce negative outcomes? Kindlon & Thomson, (2000) suggested that our schemas might well stunt the emotional development of males by expecting macho (violent and forceful) behavior, rather than supporting more healthy ways to express emotions. Violence in our society is at least partially due to such self-fulfilling prophecies. Since the self-fulfilling prophecy occurs automatically we reflect little on the consequences. Most people would be completely unaware that they practiced such discriminatory gender based behavior, as were the teachers in the aforementioned studies. Social psychologists may help by bringing to greater consciousness how schemas operate, and which expectations are thought significant in our culture.

4. Heuristics: mental shortcuts for rapid response

Often we possess mental shortcuts that allow us to make efficient decisions. Heuristics are not always accurate, but still provide for good decisions in a relatively short period of time (Gigerenzer, 2000; Gilovich & Griffin, 2002; Nisbet & Ross, 1980). Schemas often serve such a purpose based on our experience and that of others. There are situations, however, where we have no schemas. In other cases we may have too many, and we would need to try to select which is appropriate. Therefore, at times there are no ready-made schemas to employ. What to do? In these situations people use a mental shortcut called a heuristic in order to make judgments quickly and efficiently.

4.1 The availability heuristic: what comes easily to your mind?

In the case of the availability heuristic your judgment is based on what comes most easily to your mind; i.e., what is available (Schwarz & Vaughn, 2002; Tversky & Kahneman, 1973). If you have just read about something having to do with the situation, this recent information may be employed. At times what comes quickly to mind is the right solution. At other times it may lead to an inaccurate judgment. We sometimes use short cuts to describe ourselves. In the experiment by Schwarz et al., the participants were asked to find six examples of assertive behavior in one experimental condition, and another group was asked to find twelve examples in another condition. Those who were asked to think of 12 examples had difficulty in coming up with so many examples and consequently judged themselves as not assertive. Those who were only asked for six, since these examples came more readily for this group, concluded that they were in fact assertive. The ease by which people could bring examples to mind did determine self-judgment as predicted by the availability heuristic.

When something comes readily to mind it is because there are probably many such examples. Therefore the availability heuristic is often a good estimate of frequency. If you were asked to estimate the number of psychology majors at your university, how would you make an estimate? If you have among your friends or acquaintances many who are psychology majors you may conclude that there are also many enrolled at the university. If you do not know any, and none come to mind, you may conclude that there are only a few students who major in psychology.

The availability heuristic then enables a person to respond to questions about quantity or frequency based on how quickly such information is retrieved from memory (MacLeod & Campbell, 1992; Manis, Shedler, Jonides, & Nelson, 1993). If examples can be brought to mind quickly it must be because there are many of them. We can think of many more male presidents of countries than female, so we can come to the conclusion that there are more male presidents. We see in the news that most large companies have male CEO's; that also comes easy to mind and we draw similar conclusions. The rapidness and ease by which these examples come to mind, i.e. are available, therefore become a relatively accurate guide to overall frequency or probability.

Of course people do make errors with the availability heuristic. Some events make deeper impressions and therefore are more readily available. If you had experienced a hurricane at the Black sea, you might conclude that this inland ocean is stormy. Others, who have only enjoyed sunny days at the beach, may think of the Black Sea as very tranquil. In the Kahneman and Tversky (1973) study the participants were asked if there were more words that began with the letter "r", or more words with the letter "r" in third position. It was easier for the participants to think of words beginning with "r", and they therefore estimated a higher frequency. In actual fact there are more words with the letter "r" in third position in English, but since they do not come readily to mind, the availability heuristic produced the wrong estimate.

We have also seen that when violence is over-reported in the news it leads to many people becoming fearful, a state of mind not justified by real statistics. The violence of video games may lead a young person to see a world of violence in which you strike first to avoid being a victim. In each case there is a misleading emphasis on the frequency of violence that is not reflected in the real world, but nevertheless affects behavior. In the western media reports of murder occur every day. In actual fact the US is the murder capital of the world with tens of thousands of victims each year. On the other hand we seldom hear about suicides in our society as they seem less dramatic, and therefore less newsworthy. This leads people to estimate that the murder rate of murder is higher that that of suicides, when in actual fact suicides outnumber murder by a 3 to 2 margin. Dramatic deaths get more press coverage and are therefore more available. Research shows an overestimation of deaths from accidents and other dramatic death and an underestimate of more silent deaths due to disease (Slovic, Fischoff, & Lichenstein, 1982).

Likewise, we tend to overestimate our own contribution to ongoing projects. Why? Because we are familiar with what we have done, and it comes readily to mind. In general people overestimate their own contributions, and underestimate that of others (Ross & Sicoly, 1979). Often people feel they are under-appreciated for the work they do, and likely this is because of misapplication of the availability heuristic. Essentially then, the availability heuristic helps us judge the frequency of some situations, the probability that certain outcomes will occur, or the size of some category by how readily examples come to mind (Schwarz & Vaughn, 2002). The ease of generating examples seems to guide our judgment.

4.2 The representativeness heuristic

Suppose you are asked if a specific person belongs to or is a representative of the national category Dutch. If you have limited information you might look for characteristics that match or are similar to a prototype you carry in your mind of the typical Dutch. With little information to go on people often use the representative heuristic or trying to judge based on degree of similarity. It is as if this mental short-cut tells you that a member of any population group ought to look similar to the prototype you carry in your mind. Does the person look Vietnamese, or Chinese, or Japanese? What category is the person judged to similar to?

If you think the typical values of psychology are pursuit of truth and the helping relationship, and you observe these traits in a person you might wrongly predict that the person becomes a psychology major in University. The function of the representativeness heuristic is to look for matching or similar behavior. Do murderers have features in common? If you are faced with such a person could you judge the person a member of that category? Obviously it depends on the accuracy of the prototype you carry in your mind. Many times people are surprised by the clean-cut appearance of serial or mass murderers in the western world. On the other hand we may have a good handle on other categories, such as members of racial or ethnic groups.

The representativeness heuristic also encourages specific correlated assessments between cause and effects. If "like" goes with "like", we would expect that large causes would have large effects. A small earthquake would cause less damage, a large earthquake more. In other words small goes with small, large with large. However, that is not always true. We know that very small organisms can be deadly as in the case of the AIDS virus (Gilovich & Savitsky, 2002). Again, we must use caution when making such estimates or judgments. The symptoms of an illness do not always resemble the cause or cure, although the representativeness heuristic has influenced traditional medicine in that direction. For example in traditional Chinese medicine those who had vision problems were often fed chopped bats because bats were assumed to have excellent vision (Deutsch, 1977). Even today the representativeness heuristic continues to influence thinking about body and health. People are told to avoid milk if they have colds, because milk resembles the phlegm typical of cold suffers. In fact there is no relationship. Many of us have heard the term "you are what you eat". Of course that is sensible to some degree. Eating too many calories will produce fat in the body. However, just because you eat only pork does not mean you will look like a pig or be piggish in your behavior.

Even in the pseudoscience of astrology we can observe a resemblance between the supposed sign and personality. Those born under the sign of Virgo (virgin) are supposed to be modest and retiring; whereas those born under Leo, the lion, are supposed to be forceful leaders of men. Obviously there is no validity to these pseudo beliefs, but that does not prevent people from believing sincerely. Even a powerful person like Reagan, the former president of the US, was a "true" believer (Abell, 1981; Zusne & Jones, 1982). It is kind of scary to think that the leader of the most powerful nation applied the representativeness heuristic and believed in such nonsense. Himmler, the exterminator in the Nazi empire, and other ranking members of the regime also believed in astrology. History is showed the foolhardiness and stupidity of these beliefs.

Other fields are also influenced by the representativeness heuristic e.g. graphology, the analysis of handwriting. It is a field of continued investigation, in which some reliable relationships have been found between handwriting and behavior (Nevo, 1986). If your handwriting is shaky perhaps it is a clue to a nervous personality or some neurological disorder. Doctor's handwriting in the western world is generally considered unreadable. Does that say something about doctor's personality, or is readability not a priority for busy and hardworking medical experts? If handwriting slants does that reveal anything about the person? Is the person who slants to the left more likely to be a good socialist, and those who slant to the right pro-capitalist? We may all see that these are absurd conclusions that reflect the representativeness heuristic. In short, the representativeness heuristic is a mental shortcut where we categorize something if it is similar to what is believed to be a typical or representative schema.

4.3 The problem of illusionary correlations

At times we may observe the availability and the representativeness heuristics operating together. When events occur together we are often led to believe they are correlated when in fact it is only coincidence we are observing. An illusionary correlation occurs when two variables are believed correlated, but in fact are not related (Chapman & Chapman, 1967). This is an issue of no small importance to psychology. For example clinical psychologists often rely on projective tests like the Rorschach and Draw-a- person tests to make clinical diagnosis of the mentally ill. Other research has demonstrated that these projective techniques fail most standards for reliability. For example in the Draw-a-person test the client is asked to draw a picture which the psychologist then interprets for signs of underlying mental illness. Clinicians report many connections between drawings and specific pathological categories. The drawings and the pathologies seemed to go together in the mind of the clinicians. For example people who suffer from paranoia are thought to draw very large or small eyes on the person depicted.

These illusionary correlations were investigated in the Chapman study. The investigators randomly presented 45 Draw-a-person pictures, 35 reportedly from mentally ill clients, and 10 from graduate students. Each of the pictures had a random description attached. There was no clinical relationship between the description and the pictures; the descriptions were applied randomly and not connected to the picture in any way. In one case the description was “is very suspicious of others”, or another “is easily frightened”. The results showed that although no relationship between description and picture was emphasized the participants observed the same clinical relationships as those of the clinicians. Large eyes, for example, indicated also to the participants’ paranoia. The participants observed the same illusionary correlations as the clinicians by the mere fact that they (the pictures) presented a joint operation of the availability and representativeness heuristics. In another part of the experiment the investigators asked which different body parts were related to which mental disease category. Again the respondents responded in similar ways as the clinicians employing the same heuristics.

*4.4 Other cognitive short-cut*s

We can also imagine “what could have been in a possible event, if only the conditions had been different”. Kahneman and Tversky (1973) called this the simulation heuristic. This heuristic helps us understand the psychology of near misses, or “if only something were slightly different”. If the couple driving had arrived at the railroad crossing only five seconds later the passing train would not have killed them. We use this heuristic for a variety of mental tasks, to help us understand regret or grief (Seta, McElroy, & Seta, 2001). For example if you go to the airport at the same time as another traveler, but both of you are delayed by traffic jams. The other traveler is told his plane left 30 minutes ago, whereas you are told that your plane left only minutes ago. Who would be the most frustrated? Undoubtedly you who barely missed the plane and who through the simulation heuristic can imagine a different outcome, like, “if you had only left ten minutes earlier”.

Counter factual reasoning is where some negative event leads people to think of more desirable outcomes given different circumstances. You did poorly on a test. You might tell yourself “if I had only studied more I would have passed” (Markman & Tetlock, 2000). Counter factual reasoning involves trying to imagine alternative versions of real events. What if this happened? When something unpleasant takes place does it help us to imagine how things could have been, with a different version of the event? We can in fact feel better if we imagine how much worse the event could have been. The couple was killed at the railroad crossing, but thankfully no one on the train was injured, we might reason (Taylor, Wood, & Lichtman, 1983). The simulation heuristic might also help you to prepare for future unpleasant events. Consider the following experience of one of the authors. On two separate years I fell from high ladders, and the second time I injured myself seriously, like mentioned before. I have often gone over what happened in my mind. I am standing at the top rung, my chain saw in my right hand, reaching out for a few remaining branches, taking a terrible chance that the ladder being insecure would give way. Well it did. It would have been so easy to avoid, like not standing on the highest rung, waiting until someone could support the ladder, or letting someone younger take charge. Simulating it I also realize I could have easily died as I lay injured on the ground. That from my perspective would be a worse outcome so I am lucky. I can also imagine that I will not find myself in the same position again. That is preparing for the future. I was highly motivated to change, one of the important functions of counter factual reasoning and the simulation heuristic (McMullen & Markman, 2000).

4.5 The anchoring heuristic

When we are asked to judge some event we need some reference point based on previous experience. How far will the Amsterdam Football Club AJAX reach in the coming Champions League? Since we really do not know, how can we come to some assessment? We can start by thinking of past Champions League, whether the AJAX-players this year are the same as last year, and the nature of the other teams in the league. The previous international competition becomes an “anchor” around which points can be added or deducted based on the other variables. The anchoring heuristic is simply a departure point for coming up with some reasonable estimate of some future event. Like in the case of other heuristics, the anchoring heuristic is a device for stimulating our memory, and eliciting the appropriate schema.

The anchoring heuristic may be also used to estimate the average number of supporters who will attend the home matches of Ajax in the Amsterdam Arena. Again you can reference the numbers from the previous competition, let us say 40,000 spectators. This time around you think there will be 56,000 spectators (fully booked stadium), the team is improved, and there is a new coach. The previous event again served as the anchor for estimating the current competition.

5. Intuitive versus controlled thinking

So far we have taken note of the evidence for two types of thinking. The first type is the automatic thinking represented by schemas and heuristic. The second more controlled thinking is represented by counter factual thinking and thought suppression. The difference between the two forms of thinking is the difference between intuition, which is automatic, and reasoning that is controlled. We seem to have two minds when addressing a problem, or two systems of thought. The presence of these two systems has been reported in many studies (Epstein, 1991; Kahneman & Frederick, 2002; Sloman, 2002). The intuitive system responds quickly to situations that require immediate decisions. Our past experience or cultural influence helps a speedy process via the aforementioned schemas and heuristics. The second reasoning system is controlled by nature and hence slower in processing information. Perhaps the decision is of great significance to the individual, or is perceived to have long term or broad effects, and hence requires a more deliberate process.

Whatever the problem one will always be able to provide an answer through the rapid process of schemas and heuristics. When the answer is not appropriate or useful, it may then be overridden by the more deliberate rational system. The rational reasoning process serves as a censor, or final check, in order to avoid the common pitfalls discussed previously. Tversky and Kahneman's work on heuristics has had a profound influence in several areas including psychology, but also economics, management, political science and other fields (Gilovich, Griffin, &Kahneman, 2002; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). The fact that so many fields have found the concepts of heuristics and schemas useful adds a great deal of face validity to the paradigm. Controlled thinking is defined as conscious cognition, where the evaluations are intentional, and as a consequence voluntary whereas automatic thinking occurs without any conscious effort. The second mode of controlled thinking serves as a check or balance for automatic thinking. If a decision from automatic thinking is not functional or contains problems, and if the issue is important, the individual will be motivated to reevaluate.

Think of the commercials that are played on television. Often these advertisements are on the screen for only a few seconds. The objective is not to have the viewer go through a process of the pros and cons of the product. In selling a particular kind of toothpaste the manufacturer does not want to engage in controlled thinking, or have you go through a serious process of evaluation as to which is best from the point of dental hygiene. All they want is to engage your automatic system to create schemas and name familiarity. Next time you go to the supermarket you will not engage in some dialog with your inner self, "yes, this product is better, I know the research". No, rather than such a deliberate process the advertiser manipulates the unconscious mind associating the product with simple slogans "will make your teeth brighter", or "9 out of 10 dentists recommend this toothpaste". Neither assertion has to be true, but if they are implanted it may affect your purchasing behavior (Chaiken, 1987; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty, Priester, & Brinol, 2002). In many ways political campaigns are based on similar automatic manipulations.

Suppose however, that the message on television is sufficiently significant to encourage you to turn off your internal automatic pilot and listen carefully. Some studies do show that when people face significant tasks and decisions they will make more complex and accurate decisions (Kruglanski &Webster, 1996). On the other hand, when it does not really matter what the outcome is, your life will not change regardless of the brand of toothpaste you buy, the automatic pilot will dominate (Kruglanski, 1989; Trope & Lieberman, 1996). Even when people make efforts to understand the world they will still make many errors. We are still influenced by wishful thinking, and our belief systems will still override any evidence to the contrary. Training in the scientific mode of thinking, sufficient skepticism, are important defenses against illusionary thinking. We can observe in any culture very intelligent people who still will maintain absurd thoughts and beliefs. Intelligence alone is not a sufficient defense against deluded beliefs and behavior. Rather, we must be skeptical of ourselves, and repeatedly revisit decisions to see if they conform to some objective standard of truth (Wilson & Brekke, 1994).

5.1 Automatic thinking governs much of our behavior

The amount of research on heuristics and schemas should also suggest that these forms of thinking are of great importance to the psychological economy of the individual. In our busy and complex world we could not exist unless we had rapid response systems that might be more or less accurate. There is also a strong need for more complex reasoning as noted above. For example, we have seen how false minority stereotypes can have very negative consequences for individuals and society.

Automatic thinking is so persuasive in all areas of life, and yet we by and large remain unaware of its presence. Technology has brought us to the point that machines mimic the human condition. Just like people modern jetliners manage very complex operations including takeoff and landing by automatic pilot, a computer based response system. Only in emergencies is the automatic response system is inadequate, and the pilot must take over and save the plane. It is also important to remember that we might think we are controlling our thinking, and our behavior is therefore rational, when in fact we are just rationalizing decisions made previously by automatic pilot. Beliefs in our rational behavior can be just another illusion (Wegner, 2002). In fact despite our beliefs in our rational thinking it might still be controlled automatically or by the environment, we have just placed a more desirable label on it. Even when we believe, sincerely, that our behavior is based on rational thought it may in fact be quite automatic. To develop rational human behavior is perhaps more a goal than a reality for most people.

5.2 Is the development of rational thinking a hopeless project?
Shall we give up or are there some things we can do in education that might improve controlled and deliberate thinking? Many of the problems we have discussed in social cognition could be ameliorated by training in statistics and research methodology (Nisbet, Fong, Lehman, & Cheng, 1987). Training in economics and other forms of logical education may also help (Larrick, Morgan, & Nisbett, 1990). Teaching people basic statistical skills would help the reasoning process as statistics is a system of logic that is the foundation of all scientific enterprise. Such courses would involve the ideas of probability, how to generalize from a small sample to a population, and the nature of random sampling. In fact studies have demonstrated that our reasoning powers may be improved through such courses (Crandall & Greenfield, 1986; Malloy, 2001; Nisbet, Fong, Lehman, & Cheng, 1987). This aforementioned research shows also that students in psychology and medicine improved more than those enrolled in law and chemistry. Among psychology graduate students the improvements were especially impressive. This finding should be an encouragement to all engaged in the psychological enterprise. Perhaps at some point all students at a given university should take statistical courses to reason better, become better scientists, and more informed citizens of the world. If our students are trained well in the sciences, and develop the appropriate skeptical attitude toward all knowledge, there is some hope that mystical, stereotypic thinking might be reduced in favor of better decision making.

We might also ask people to consider whether they might be wrong .In one study people were asked to consider the opposite point of view. When asked to do this they often realized that there were different ways of construing the world (Lord, Lepper, & Preston, 1984; Hirt & Markman, 1995; Mussweiler, Strack, & Pfeiffer, 2000). People can be trained to use their minds and avoid simplistic and automatic responses. It obviously is a major responsibility of the educational system to inculcate skeptical attitudes in young students from the earliest. Instead in most nations early school is used primarily as a socialization tool to encourage conformity to social ideology and standards. Of course all nations have the right to socialize children and young people. In doing so, however, they create schemas that permit automatic thinking. The call by people in the streets of Afghanistan for death against those who are believed to defame the Prophet are results of such schemas, as is most of the international violence in the world.

6. Social cognition and clinical psychology
All human beings make judgments about others, and as we have seen psychologists are subject to similar errors. We all walk around with "implicit" personality theories in judging other people, yet remain completely unaware of what influences our judgments. Our stereotypes are examples of such theories. We might say "women are emotional" or "athletes are aggressive" or "sales people are extroverted". These are all examples of implicit personality theories that serve as the aforementioned schemas in easing our interaction with others. We often do not have a good handle on what influenced such thinking (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). We also judge ourselves. In general we tend to believe what is said about us, as long as it is positive (Shavit & Shouval, 1980). What guides acceptance of self-descriptions is the degree of positive traits included in the assessment. Up to a point the more favorable the description, the more it is accepted as factual. This low level of cognition can also be observed in cases where people accept fake self-description as equally valid, or in some cases even more valid, than those based on objective testing. People are not able to distinguish between the validity of real descriptions or those that are pure inventions. We seem to have endless capacity for self-delusion.

Professional clinical psychologists are subject to similar errors. Often clinical judgments are based on projective techniques that have little reliability or validity. But the patient is impressed by the clinicians and believes in the diagnosis. The consequence of the diagnosis takes the route of the self-fulfilling prophecy. The clinician believes in the presence of certain pathology. He then treats the patient accordingly. Pretty soon the patient behaves consistent with these expectations. Professional judgment is subject to illusionary correlations seeing relationships where really there are none. Psychologists often become over confident by searching only for confirming information of the diagnosis rather than keeping an open mind. Followers of Freud will visit and revisit childhood, and will soon enough come up with a host of events which by themselves may have had little effect, but in confirming a diagnosis are seen as evidence for pathology. In believing there is a relationship, we all, including clinicians, are more likely to see confirming than disconfirming evidence. This is true not only for psychologists, but for all those who contemplate human behavior whether economists or political scientists. Even physical scientists who were convinced the earth was flat used considerable energy to maintain that illusion, including sanction by religion.

Hindsight is always right. As we say hindsight is 20/20, meaning that in looking back we have perfect vision. In one famous study Rosenhan (1973) and a number of his associates got themselves admitted to mental hospitals complaining that they heard “voices”. The claims were bogus, but were offered in an attempt to assess the judgment of clinicians. Otherwise the “patients” reported truthfully their life histories and exhibited no further symptoms. Most were classified as schizophrenics. The clinicians, who found “evidence” in the life story told, when in fact the patients had no pathology, then confirmed the mental illness diagnoses of the bogus patients. When Rosenhan later told the mental health workers about the experiment, he also advised them that more bogus patients would seek admittance. During the following three months 193 patients were admitted. Now the mental health staff accused up to 41 of being bogus patients who were in fact in need of treatment. In reality, Rosenhan sent no further bogus patients during the period. These results cast serious doubts on clinical judgment in the case of abnormal behavior.

Clinical psychology often has its findings confounded by diagnoses that are confirmed by looking only for supporting evidence. Snyder (1984) found evidence that clinicians look primarily for information that will confirm the traits they have diagnosed. Our beliefs about what is true generate information that confirms it, based on the process of selective perception (Dallas & Baron, 1985; Snyder & Thomsen, 1988). In several experiments it was shown that people will first look for confirming evidence before seeking disconfirmation. This bias is not at a conscious level. Our questions are biased by our desire to have the diagnosis confirmed. People who undergo therapy therefore become the persons that their therapists believe they are, having searched and found evidence for their pathology. We can see that intuitive reasoning is very flawed, and may at times do actual harm to the client seeking help.

6.1 Intuition versus statistics

Although most clinicians continue to have confidence in their clinical insights, intuition is a poor second best when compared to more objective methods. For example admission to university or graduate school is often based on a combination of statistical measures. Such objective measures consistently outperform any subjective judgments in predicting student success (Dawes, Faust, and Meehl, 1989; Meehl, 1954; Meehl,1986). We have already noted the superiority of logical and statistical reasoning, although we recognize that clinicians work in very difficult conditions and often in unchartered waters where intuition must play some role. It is important, however, to remember that patients and clinicians are subject to the same errors as other human beings.

In summary, we are often unaware of what particular influences, past or present, which influence our judgment of others. Selective perception may encourage inaccurate assessments. This is particularly true if we rely, as most of us do, on the stereotypes of society. All societies inculcate stereotypes about categories of people, gender, professions, ethnic groups and so forth. While there are elements of truth in stereotypes they are for the most part gross exaggerations. Our self-perceptions are particularly unreliable. Every time people go to eat Chinese food they are given a fortune cookie as dessert. Inevitably the fortune cookie encloses a written fortune. Equally inevitably the fortune is written in such a way as to be applicably to everyone. Some people however, see particular meanings in what is after all random messages. Positive assessments are nearly always accepted, whether justified or not.

Mental health workers are subject to similar problems in social judgment. They may through intuition provide worthless diagnosis, and their clients being convinced of the therapist's professional competence readily accept the judgment. After making the diagnosis the process is essentially one of confirming the decision. In psychoanalysis, for example, the "child is the father of the man", therefore the therapist examines early childhood for clues to current problems. Since all people have experienced some issues in growing up it is not difficult to find the supporting data. Once the judgment is made, these erroneous diagnoses can easily be confirmed leading to the self-fulfilling prophecy. Again, the proper attitude is always having an open mind. By being skeptical of ourselves we can avoid some of the many errors described in this chapter.

6.2 Social cognition and mental health

Correlated cognitive processes that affirm the patient's maladaptive life perspective accompany mental ill health. We can ask what are the thought patterns of the troubled personality. Some patients withdraw from social interaction, feel unworthy, and lose interest in family or the social environment. Having a very pessimistic outlook on life may therefore affect perception of experiences. What are just normal struggles for a healthy person can become insurmountable obstacles for the troubled person. Cognition plays an important role in perpetuating ill health, and therefore improvement may come about from reassessing how we think about ourselves.

6.2.1 Anxiety and cognition

The most fundamental problems in mental health are related to anxiety, and especially excessive anxiety. Some people are so anxious in social situations that they are unable to converse, effectively meet others, or apply for a job. Such anxiety can have sad consequences for the individual. An anxious person is less likely to lead a successful life, less likely to find a happy relationship, or master possible employment opportunities.

Why are we anxious? In many cases anxiety derives from our desire to make good and acceptable impressions on others. Fearing rejection is a primary cause of social anxiety (Leary,1984; Maddux, Norton, & Leary 1988). The aforementioned research indicated several significant social situations that produce anxiety. Applying for a job where we meet a powerful person who has the power to hire and fire is one cause. Other powerful persons include teachers, police, and other sources of authority. Any situation where we are likely to be evaluated is a primary cause for anxiety. Perhaps when you meet the family of your boy or girlfriend the first time, and you have a high desire to be accepted, perhaps as a student if you make a presentation in class and want to make a good impression on fellow students as well as the professor. Anxiety is also likely if we find ourselves in some new situation for the first time, and are unsure of correct or proper responses.

Shyness is a personality trait since we all vary in that dimension from others who are very adapted and extroverted to those who are extremely self-conscious. Some people spend all their lives worrying what others think of them (Anderson & Harvey, 1988; Carver & Scheier, 1986). The social cognition of extremely shy people tends toward overestimating events as having personal consequences, and where they feel without evidence that people are evaluating them in some negative direction. Alcoholism is often a consequence for those who are anxious. Sadly it just reinforces feelings of worthlessness, and of course also provides an alibi for failure (Snyder & Smith, 1986). Our lives become what we think they should become.

6.2.2 Cognition and depression

Some form of negative thinking is central to depression. Depressed people view their experiences in very negative terms, and minimize what is good in their lives. Cognition is therefore distorted. Does the distortion antedate the depression, or follow the depressed feelings? Either way social cognition leaves the person in a trap of thinking worthless thoughts which in turn are expressed in lower work output and troubled relations with others. That social inadequacy in turn reinforces the feelings of hopelessness and of being inadequate. More importantly the depressed person's behavior is likely to elicit rejection by others. If your work suffers from depressed feelings and thinking, is that likely to lead to a promotion or demotion? Depressed thinking is very self-defeating because it elicits in others the rejection that the anxiously depressed person wants to avoid in the first place.

Is depression a consequence of having unrealistic views of oneself and others? In severe depressions distortion in thinking is present. However, mildly depressed people often make more realistic judgments than non-depressed people (Alloy & Abramson, 1979). On the other hand non-depressed people are more self-serving and exaggerate their sense of control in life (Dobson & Franche, 1989). Perhaps optimism, even when not warranted helps the individual to cope more effectively.

Among very depressed people thinking is dominated by self-blame, and self-attributions of personal responsibility. Sweeney, Anderson, and Bailey (1986) showed that depressed people compared to others are more likely to develop a negative attributional style, where they attribute failure to internal causes and faults. They tend to think depressing outcomes are going to last and are permanent, and will affect everything in life. Such self-blame leads to a sense of hopelessness (Abramson, Metalsky, & Alloy, 1989). So perhaps it is useful to be a little delusional, to emphasize the positive in self-presentation. Such distortion in thinking may help us be happier and lead more productive lives. Of course self-delusion can also have negative consequences when we ignore real problems that need correction, or take unnecessary risks.

Is it negative thinking that causes depression, or does depression cause negative thinking? There is little doubt that our mood effects how we think. If we are depressed the feeling permeates everything in our lives, and the world is a gray and unfriendly place. Depressed people have views of their parents as punitive and rejecting. Once brought out of their depression they tend to view their parents in positive ways as do people who have never been depressed (Lewinsohn & Rosenbaum, 1987). With depression our memory is affected as we recollect childhood events or relationships. Our relations with others are negative, our hopes diminish, and the world seems more sinister (Mayer & Salovey, 1987). Forgas, Bower, and Krantz (1984) used hypnosis to create depressive or positive moods. The participants were then asked to view the same tape under the two conditions of happy or depressed mood. The results demonstrated how mood affects our perceptions and our cognitive judgment, with the same tape being judged differently depending on the induced mood.

One major problem for depressed people is that they often elicit negative reactions from others, and sadly they can also contribute to reciprocal depression in family and those who associate with the depressed person. Depressed people produce depression in those with whom they associate. Hence it is no surprise that they are more likely to be divorced or fired from their jobs. All such rejection of course intensifies the depression (Coyne, Burchill & Stiles, 1991; Sacco & Dunn, 1990). From these findings we can answer our question, yes depression has an effect on cognition and perception.

6.2.3 Can negative cognition produce depression?

Now we come to the second part of the issue. Does negative thinking come before depression, and therefore be a cause? Some research supports this contention (Sacks & Bugenthal, 1987). When we adopt a negative attributional style depression is likely to follow. Lewinsohn, Hoberman, Teri, and Hautziner (1985) describe the process as one of a vicious cycle. The negative attributions and expectations contribute to rejecting experiences that leads to unrealistic self-blame which in turn reinforces the depressed mood (Seligman, 1989). We can see now that depression can be both a cause as well as a consequence of self-blaming cognitions.

7. We live in a lonely world

Loneliness is also related to self-defeating cognitive styles. Lonely people like the depressed are locked into a self-defeating vicious cycle where they blame themselves for their social inadequacy, and generally feel a lack of control in their lives (Anderson & Riger, 1991). Another distorted cognition is a negative view that lonely people have toward other people. You are not likely to establish relationships with others if you somehow convey your general negative views. People will seek company that is reinforcing of their self-perceptions and whose relationship is experienced as rewarding. Lonely people therefore create negative impressions in others that few are likely to test in long term relationships.

7.1 Negative social cognition and our health

Do negative cognitions that are accompanied by negative emotions contribute to poor physical health? Health psychology is a relative new field as the Division of American Psychological Association was formed in 1979. It has long been viewed likely that stressful events, if not handled well by appropriate cognition, may impact a variety of physical diseases. Some diseases thought implicated include heart disease, suppression of the immune system (making the individual more vulnerable to a variety of disorders), and effects on the autonomic nervous system (leading to head aches, and eventually to hypertension).

Heart disease has been linked to the anger prone personality (Friedman, 1991). Under stress it is believed that hormones contribute to the building up of plaque in the arteries bringing on serious heart disease if prolonged. Long-term stress may also compromise the immune system producing vulnerability to a variety of diseases (Cohen & Wiliamson, 1991).

7.2 Optimism: taking control of our lives

Living in the western world today is living in the midst of multiple demands and stress. As globalization proceeds, so unfortunately will also the associated stress of our fast paced lives. In the last couple of decades people have become more aware of the negative health effects of common stress reduction means employed by millions of people throughout the world. These include drinking to excess, smoking, and the pervading drug culture. All these means of escape have very negative consequences and claim each year millions of victims to cancer, heart disease and strokes.

A new health culture has emerged in response to these statistics. More people today walk or ride bicycles than in the previous decades. Many people have opted for a better life style, trying to maintain vitality as the human lifespan allows. Health clubs have emerged where people in sedentary jobs can get the exercise needed and reduce stress at the same time. Since stress is such a major culprit in health issues there is also more awareness of the need to relax, and in developing supportive relationships to overcome loneliness. Even tobacco companies have become so defensive with their health robbing products that they now also advise on how to cease smoking. These activities are for the most part hypocritical given the highly addictive nature of nicotine. Once they get a young person to smoke they often have a costumer for life.

Over-eating is another attempt to escape stress and associated anxiety. When people feel their lives are not satisfying they often escape into the fast food culture of today. In the Western world many believe that fast food restaurants like McDonalds are mainly responsible for the fat epidemic among children and adults. Currently there is a movement to reduce access of these unhealthy foods in the school system.

However, despite such logical efforts to improve health, many suffer ill health from the self-defeating cognition previously discussed. Negative attributional styles lead to self-defeating behaviors, and a vicious cycle of self-recriminations. Just like pessimism may lead to ill health so too can rethinking and developing a more optimistic assessment help defeat hopelessness.

Early researchers (Visintainer & Seligman, 1983) showed in an animal experiment how one could induce learned helplessness. Rats were given electric shocks in two conditions. One group was given shocks, but with the possibility to escape from the painful stimuli. Another group, however, was tied to the electric grid and not allowed to escape. The latter group developed what the experimenters called learned helplessness. Since it did not matter how much they struggled, the rats could not escape the noxious stimuli, the rats became passive and listless. The experimenters noted many negative health effects of learned helplessness including cancers from compromised immune systems. Stress is a culprit in disease (Dixon, 1986). Peterson & Seligman(1987) suggested that if pessimism brings ill health then perhaps optimism could help reverse these effects. In the study optimists outlived pessimists. In another study on terminal cancer, patients who developed an optimistic cognitive style outlived those who were pessimistic (Levy, Lee, Bagley, & Lippman, 1988). Hopelessness and pessimism compromise the immune system leading to early death (Kamen, Seligman, Dwyer, & Rodin,1988).

Social psychology has made a contribution to better health by emphasizing that we are what we do, our behavior often produces attitudes and emotions. If we can change behavior perhaps the thinking and emotional consequences will also change. Behavior therapists maintain that inner dispositions simply follow behavior. If a person is shy the behavior requires assertiveness training and the shyness will change or disappear. Rational-emotive therapy states that emotions are the consequence of our thinking. If we consistently and chronically say negative things about ourselves, our emotions will be consistent with this negativity. If we change how we think, it should have positive consequences for how we feel (Mirels & McPeek, 1977).

7.3 Reversing negative attribution

The aforementioned negative attributions are maintained by our negative cognitive styles leading to self-defeating behavior. However, it should be possible to reverse the negativity by reversing negative thinking, and engaging in therapy like assertiveness training that directly confronts the problem. Since the negative attributions are not supported by who the person is, but may be the consequence of negative life experiences, it is possible to reverse these attributions through therapy as suggested by Abramson, (1988). Changing attributions (taking credit for the positive and more realistic assessments of the negative) helps depressed people in achieve higher self-esteem, and lower depression. By changing how we think we can improve our emotional health.

Summary

This chapter reviews some of the research on social cognition. How do people utilize information in making decisions? How do they interpret, and organize responses to stimulation in the social environment? Part of the debate concerns two types of thinking, automatic and controlled thinking. Automatic thinking requires no evaluation, like responses during a crisis. Other decisions, such as choosing a life partner, require more careful evaluation that is controlled thinking. Neither type is error free, as we are influenced in many ways. Still we have to make decisions in spite of this often very incomplete information, errors, and biases.

Information derived from our own experiences reflects many sources of bias. Our expectations determine what information we gather, and what information we attend to. People favor information that lends support to their expectations. At the same time, we tend to give excessive weight to negative information that leads to illusionary correlations and stereotypes. Furthermore, decisions are often based on very small samples that are highly inadequate. Finally, anecdotal information appears to be a powerful but unreliable influence.

There is also a tendency to believe that other people have information not possessed by the individual leading to a state of pluralistic ignorance. Another bias influencing cognition and decision-making is bias in memory. What we remember corresponds with what we desire and wish at this moment. Memory can also be manipulated by therapists who implant “false memories” and encourage the patient remembers abuse for example that never happened. Even our memories of dramatic events from the past changes with the passage of time. So nothing is permanent in memory, all memory is malleable and how things should be changes to how things are in current memory.

However, many of our memories do not come from our own experience. Most of us will have no personal experience with the powerful people or events that shape the world we live in. Rather we obtain information from significant others, and from the media and use this as reference in our decision-making. Unfortunately the media is not an unbiased source of information. The term yellow journalism comes from the tendency to manipulate the news, and the emphasis on the dramatic and the negative. The media reports more violence and produces more fright than justified by objective statistics. In addition to the media the ideology of society or of powerful groups in society, provide their own unique slant. Often they are not providing information as such but try to persuade the individual.

Motivation and mood also play a role. People believe that what is real in the world is the information that is congruent with their vision of happiness. Being motivated, however, does not necessarily lead to more accurate judgments. Of course we have some ability to regulate our thoughts and feelings. In experiments on thought suppression such exercises often come at a high cost. Moreover, a commitment to powerful evaluative beliefs overrides any appeal to rationality and decisions made under temporary moods, may yet have long-term effects.

Not all thinking involves careful evaluation. In fact we have mental structures called schemas, which organizes our knowledge in preparation for automatic thinking. If we did not have these mental structures we would have to evaluate each new situation. By directing our attention in specific ways, and by completing lacking information, schemas provide an immediate basis for interaction. How else would we know how to behave when approached by a member of the opposite sex or other social category?

What activates these mental structures? Research point to three factors in activating schemas. First, the expectation of a certain situation or interaction will elicit schemas from our mental, storehouse (e.g. females are more emotional). Secondly, the similarity between the schema and a social situation may trigger the schema (e.g. last year's national cup final, and estimation of the results of this year). Thirdly, how recently the memory was used in cognition may also lead to activation of schemas. Finally, a conscious process does not necessarily elicit some cognitive structures of the mind as subconscious stimuli have been shown to produce schemas.

If the situation is important a more deliberate controlled process may overrule the automatic process of schemas. Individual differences in need for schemas are significant. Those who have little tolerance for ambiguity also have high need for automatic structures.

Research has also demonstrated important cultural differences between Western and East Asian respondents. East Asians are more cognizant of the broader environment of behaviors and their schemas reflect this understanding. Western respondents view behavior more as a function of the individual. These differences can also be observed in the prediction of the future. Western respondents have an expectation of continuity; i.e. the future will be a continuation of the current situation. On the other hand East Asians are more likely to expect discontinuity or change in the future.

Mental structures like schemas have great influence on memory. What we remember is largely a result of what our schemas direct us to attend to in the situation. Prejudice finds easy support by attending only to events that support our stereotypes. The purpose of schemas is to make interaction more efficient, but when predicated on error they obviously cause problems. Sometimes schemas result in actual behavior. The reason is that we often behave consistently with our expectations toward others, and therefore others fulfill our expectations. This self-fulfilling prophecy is a problem in education, with respect to gender issues, and in the diagnostic process in clinical psychology.

Besides schemas we also have heuristics at our disposal. Heuristics are mental shortcuts that assist in efficient evaluation and judgment. The Availability Heuristic refers to concepts that come most easily to mind. If something comes readily to mind it must be because there are many such examples, and hence is a good estimate of frequency. However, an error in estimation is possible using the availability heuristic. For example, there is a great deal of violence in the media leading people to overestimate the real violence in the world.

The Representative Heuristic allows for judgment of how similar A is to B. For example it is possible to compare a person to the typical representative existing in our minds. How similar is the target person to a Dutchman? If similar, we may interact on that basis. The Representative Heuristic is also demonstrated in the expected correlation between cause and effect. If the earthquake is large we expect the damages to be large. This heuristic can, however, also yield errors. For example, very small organisms like HIV, can cause very large damage.

A possible effect of the Representative Heuristic is illusionary correlations. This is the case when two variables are thought to be correlated, but the association is only a coincidence. Such correlations occur in clinical psychology. For example in projective tests it was thought that large eyes drawn by the client were a sign of paranoia. Illusionary correlations occur at times through selective perception. Other mental shortcuts include simulation and counter factual reasoning, where we imagine some alternative events than that which happened, and thus prepare for similar future events.

Schemes and heuristics are examples of intuitive or automatic thinking. When the issue is of great importance, controlled thinking may override the automatic. Or perhaps the automatic thinking is not working. You are using toothpaste that promises whiter teeth, but it does not happen. You might eventually think about other alternatives, a different toothpaste or some other whitening procedure. Automatic thinking governs most of our behavior although we are not aware of the influence of schemas or heuristics. However, it is possible to encourage rational thinking. In particular courses in statistics and logic may be helpful in overcoming mindless automatic thinking. Inculcating a scientific mode of thinking is very helpful on the road to rational thinking and behavior.

In clinical psychology we see that human beings, including clinicians, have an endless capacity for self-delusions. Often theory guides expectations, which in turn function as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Selective attention plays an important role in this as the clinician will frequently look for confirming evidence, and ignore that which is not congruent. When we take as evidence of pathology illusionary correlations, and search only for confirming evidence, clinical judgment may lead to a false diagnosis.

Cognition plays an important role in mental illness. Consequently, reassessing what we think may serve to improve mental health. We have seen that excessive anxiety has negative consequences for many. The major reason for anxiety is our desire to make a good impression on others, and our fear of rejection. Negative thinking is related to depression. Depressed people emphasize the negative in their lives, and undervalue the positive. This distortion has both emotional and behavioral consequences. This works both ways. Negative feelings lead to depressed thinking, and negative cognition leads to depressed feelings. We often engage in self-defeating cognitive styles that work like vicious cycles producing self-blame, social inadequacy, and feelings of lack of control. On the other hand, optimism allows us to take control of our lives and helps us reverse the effects of negative thinking. Optimism helps improve both physical and mental health.

Ulrike Guérot ~ De nieuwe burgeroorlog – Hoe populisme het open Europa bedreigt

Ulrike Guérot – Ills. Joseph
Sassoon Semah

Tot nu toe zijn de pro-Europa initiatieven als remain-Brexit en de Occupy movement in vele Europese steden er niet in geslaagd een effectieve pro-Europa slag te maken. Op 10 november 2018 werd een nieuwe poging gedaan: Vanuit theaters, vanaf balkons en op pleinen is de Europese Republiek uitgeroepen door kunstenaars en burgers. De kosmopolitische burger is voor Europa, maar niet voor de huidige EU is het uitgangspunt. We moeten af van de natiestaat en naar een EU van de
Europese burger. De grondwet van Europa moet ter hand worden genomen om een einde te maken aan de smeulende Europese burgeroorlog. De oplossing ligt in een Europees maatschappelijk verdrag voor de 21 ste eeuw.

In haar strijdschrift ‘*De Nieuwe Burgeroorlog*’ beschrijft Ulrike Guérot een Europa dat in de grootste crisis verkeert sinds de oprichting van de EU: er is een groot democratisch tekort. Europese samenlevingen zijn diep verdeeld door een politiek-ideologische strijd met enerzijds de zogenaamde identitaire bewegingen (Marine Le Pen, Geert Wilders, Norbert Hofer, Heinz-Christian Strache, Björn Höcke) en anderzijds een Europees gezinde burgermaatschappij. Wij verkeren in een ‘nieuwe Europese burgeroorlog’. Verliezers van de globalisering staan tegenover de winnaars ervan, jong tegenover oud, arm tegenover rijk, identitairen tegenover kosmopolieten. Het ‘volk’ tegenover de elite.
Het enige wat uitkomst kan bieden is een heroprichting van Europa met gelijke rechten voor gelijke burgers. ‘Leve de Europese Republiek’, aldus Ulrike Guérot.

In Europa komt er slecht weer aan. Ulrike Guérot ziet een herhaling van de geschiedenis. De politieke systemen in Europa lijken niet bij machte zich te verzetten tegen het sluipende rechts-populisme en nationalisme, dat zich in Hongarije verspreidt, maar ook in Polen, Oostenrijk, Frankrijk en Nederland. Ook in Duitsland gist en borrelt het. Opnieuw is er sprake van een burgeroorlog tussen de 'Europese geest en geesteloosheid'.
Heinrich Mann, Julien Benda, Stefan Zweig, Jacques Rivièra, Romain Rolland, ze beschouwden zich allemaal als erfgenamen van de Verlichting, het humanisme en de ratio. Ze waren anti-nationalistisch en waren de steunpilaren van de Europese geest en de Europese vrijheid.
Julien Benda's aanklacht in zijn vlammende essay '*Het verraad van de intellectuelen'* (1927) tegen nationalisme, antisemitisme, materialisme en politici die het universele en algemeen-menselijke van de Europese ideeëngeschiedenis verpatsten is super-actueel. De moderne 'klerken' (schrijvers, wetenschappers, opiniemakers) zouden zich moeten verenigen met de Verlichtingsidealen: het Recht, de Waarheid en de Rede. Het essay verscheen in 2018 voor het
eerst in het Nederlands bij Amsterdam University Press.

In deel I beschrijft Ulrike Guérot de Europese crises, veroorzaakt door het mismanagement van de euro- en bankencrisis en versterkt door de vluchtelingencrisis. Europa is verdeeld in noord en zuid, oost en west, maar ook nationale samenlevingen zijn verdeeld en niet in staat Europees te handelen. Werkloosheid, individualisme, neergang van traditionele religies, terreur, migratie van vluchtelingen, polarisering tussen arm en rijk, dragen eveneens bij aan
het crisisgevoel, aldus Guérot. De EU heeft geen antwoord op deze vraagstukken: de EU heeft verzuimd sociaal te worden. De strijd tussen rechts-populisme en de liberale democratie kan de laatste op nationaal niveau niet winnen, indien ze zich niet hervormt en europeaniseert om de ontwrichting door de bankencrisis de baas te worden, aldus Guérot.
In tegenstelling tot links en de liberale midden hebben de nationalisten en rechts-populisten hoop te bieden: de nationale staat als het toevluchtsoord voor sociale bescherming, de nationale vlag en nostalgie. De liberale democratie heeft zich niet aan haar beloftes gehouden (= is alleen nog neoliberalisme). Guérot ziet alleen nog in het theater en in de beeldende kunst een aanzet tot revolutie, vandaar haar oproep aan kunstenaars in actie te komen. Elders is linkse revolutie niet beschikbaar en zo kan het rechts-populisme hoogtij vieren.

In deel II vraag ze zich af of de geschiedenis zich gaat herhalen: een van oorsprong economische en sociale crisis en een crisis van het liberalisme mondden uit in nationalisme. Nu komt er nog een vluchtelingencrisis bij.
Er woedt een burgeroorlog in de betekenis van een controverse over hoe de structuur van de staat zou moeten zijn. De beoogde opheffing door het rechts-populisme van het democratische systeem van de politieke partijen, maar ook van representatie, overdracht, instellingen, overleg en consensus, leiden tot ontbinding van het politieke lichaam van de Europese nationale staten. De anti-institutionele strategie is ook te vinden bij radicaal links (Podemos).
Guérot haalt de Italiaanse filosoof Giorgio Agamben aan die een theorie van de burgeroorlog ontwikkelde (‘*Stasis. Der Bürgerkrieg als politisches Paradigma*’, 2016), waarbij hij een onderscheid maakt tussen volk als populus, een politiek lichaam en de massa. Groepen burgers staan nu tegenover elkaar, en ze vormen een massa, maar ze representeren niet het volk. Pegida is niet hét volk, maar slechts een massa. Crisis van representatie leidt tot ontbinding van het politieke lichaam, er zijn alleen nog concurrerende burgermassa’s, geen van hen kan de politieke representatie namens allen opeisen. Dan is er sprake van een burgeroorlog. Het politieke lichaam is uiteengevallen en moet opnieuw worden opgericht.
Het nieuwe politieke lichaam kan alleen maar Europa zijn, aldus Guérot. We moeten afstand nemen van de nationale staten en een Europese soevereine macht als politiek lichaam oprichten. Het kan niet bestaan zonder economische en sociale onderbouw. Een voorwaarde is dan ook de beëindiging van de euro-en bankencrisis.

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Deel III beschrijft de weg naar Europa, die begint in ‘de geest’ voordat het werkelijkheid kan worden. Het vereist een maatschappelijk ontwerp voor Europa als een tegenontwerp van het mondiale kapitalisme; dan kunnen we Europa opnieuw grondvesten. De economische en monetaire eenheid van Europa moet worde ingebed in een Europees sociaal en juridisch stelsel, dat op nationaal niveau vanzelfsprekend is. Een Europese werkloosheidsverzekering, een basiszekerheid en een fiscale unie zijn alle drie noodzakelijk om de sociale crisis in Europa te overwinnen.
Een echt Europa: één markt, één munt, één democratie. Via een grondwetgevende vergadering die is gebaseerd op de representatie van de Europese burgers en niét op een vergadering waarin de nationale staten dé vertegenwoordigers zijn. Het gaat om niets minder ‘dan om de grondwettelijke vastlegging van de Europese geest.’
Guérot bepleit een algemeen, direct en gelijk kiesrecht in de aanloop naar de volgende verkiezingen voor het Europees parlement in 2019, dat dient als een krachtig politiek signaal van de burgerbevolking. ‘One (wo)man, one vote.’
Het Europees maatschappelijk verdrag moet horizontaal worden georganiseerd, over de grenzen heen, direct tussen Europese burgers, niet verticaal tussen burgers en nationale staten, maar een transnationaal ‘integraal federalisme’ tussen personen. Een Europese republiek als federatie van vele regionale eenheden zonder een nationale tusseninstantie.
Noord en zuid, oost en west worden bij een gemeenschappelijke zaak gelijk; niemand is dan een European van de tweede garnituur; nationaliteit maakt geen verschil meer. De Europese geest van Stefan Zweig en Julien Benda heeft dan gewonnen en heeft een wettelijke materialisme gekregen.
Ook bepleit Guérot het direct kiezen van de Europese president ter bevordering van de eenheid, evenals een twee-kamersysteem in de Europese republiek der regio’s waardoor de betekenis van de regio’s in het politieke systeem van Europa wordt versterkt.
Het fiscale federalisme schept eveneens de voorwaarde voor de politieke eenheid, en die is de basis voor de veiligheid van Europa.
Het stichten van een res publica europaea is het centrale doel.
Met gelijke rechten voor gelijke burgers! ‘Wij zijn de burgers van Europa! Leve de Europese republiek!’

Over de auteur:
Ulrike Guérot is hoogleraar Europese politiek en democratie aan de universiteit van Kres, Oostenrijk. Eerder schreef Guérot '*Red Europa! Waarom Europa een republiek moet worden*'.

The European Balcony project (europeanbalconyproject.eu) is een initiatief van Ulrike Guérot, Robert Menasse en the European Democracy Lab in Berlijn, waarvan Guérot de oprichter is. (eudemlab.org)
Zie:
https://www.facebook.com/thaliatheater/videos/europea-balcony-project-trailer/452906251874980/

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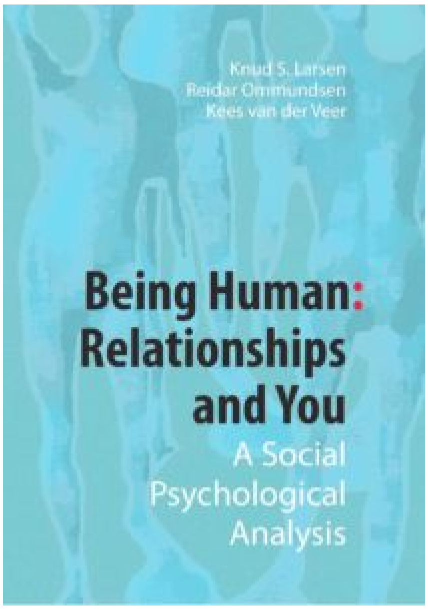
Being Human. Chapter 5: Attitude Formation And Behavior



There are many social issues that provoke public debate and engage people attitudes. Around these issues we can observe three components (beliefs, emotion, and behavior) of attitudes are activated. Global warming is an issue with profound implications for our survival and indeed the survival of all species and the planet. Recently former presidential candidate Al Gore received the Nobel Peace Prize for drawing the world's attention to the dire prospects of our future unless we take decisive action. More and more public opinion (beliefs) is coming around and people are beginning to take serious the warning of the overwhelming majority of the world's scientists. The beliefs of many common citizens are being modified to recognizing that things cannot go on as they have in the past, and that we must change. Some people have fully engaged their emotions as can be seen in letters to the editors of many newspapers and journals. These citizens feel the warnings at a very personal level and are not just willing to write letters, but also go on marches (behavior) in protest. Environmental beliefs are integrated for many people resulting in changed behavior where they take greater efforts to recycle, install energy saving devices in their homes, and drive more energy efficient cars. The world is changing, but is the rate of change sufficient to avoid future disasters. Only history will tell.

In the above vignette we can see various elements of attitudes and their effect on subsequent behavior, the important topics of this chapter. How did people form attitudes which brought them to the opposing sides of the global warming issue? Were their positions just fleeting opinions? Does the behavior of environmentalists who dissented from the indifference of politicians express more deeply held attitudes reflecting central values in their lives? Do those who express indifference toward environmental disaster hold more conformist attitudes that change with shifting popularity of viewpoints?

For people whose attitudes do not reflect deeply held values, attitude change can indeed occur rapidly. The popularity of president Bush has risen or fallen with dizzying speed. In the time before September 11, 2001, about 50 percent of the American people approved of his administration and leadership. This rose to 82 percent immediately following the attacks. However, by September of 2003 as the war continued to bring causalities, Bush's popularity dropped back down again to 52 percent. As we write now in 2007, Bush's popularity has fallen to an all time low. Obviously many who liked Bush in the past were "fair weather" supporters who have changed their views as the causalities and destruction have mounted in the months following the initial attack.

This vignette shows the importance of understanding the formation and structure of attitudes, and how attitudes may be changed. Attitude research is a central topic in social psychology from both the perspective of being salient to our concerns, and a topic we social psychologists started working on early in our history.

1. The structure and components

There is a common agreement among most social psychologists about the presence of three components in attitudes. The affective or emotional component we saw exhibited in the aforementioned vignette by manifestations of anger and contempt for the opposing sides. The second component, the cognitive factor refers to the beliefs that accompany the emotions, for example the newly discovered beliefs about the fragility of the environment. The third component, the behavioral, refers to the behaviors elicited by the affective and cognitive components. In our example attitudes may produce demonstrations for or against environmental policies, but may also be manifested in other behaviors such as participating in election campaigns, or in signing petitions.

Any attitude is composed of these three elements, and is always oriented positively or negatively toward some attitude object. Practically anything you can imagine might be an attitude object. You can have attitudes toward persons, ideas, or things. For example you may be positive or negative toward the leader of your country, a person, toward his policies (ideas), or toward inanimate objects (like posters or flags which symbolize viewpoints). In fact you can have an attitude toward the classroom in which you study. Look around and see if that is not true (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998; Fazio, 2000; McGuire, 1985)!

In general the three components are consistent with each other. A person, who has a positive attitude toward the environment, is also likely to have a set of beliefs that sustain this position, and may behave in a consistent manner. At election time the supporter may vote for environmental candidates, write letters to newspaper editors, or donate money to a favored candidate. Affect, cognition and behavior tend to move in the same direction toward the attitude object.

People may hold complex beliefs with respect to the attitude object, but the overall evaluation tends to be simple. One consequence of this apparent contradiction is that people may easily change certain beliefs, while still maintaining their basic evaluations. Many attitudes are like that, cognitively complex, but simple in terms of overall evaluations. These overall evaluations (positive or negative feelings) are more difficult to change than aspects of the supporting belief system. In the functional psychological economy of the individual, attitudes serve as primers. They make decision making more rapid by allowing for more or less automatic responses. Rapid decision-making is possible because the salient information is held in memory storage and is easily accessible to the person (Judd, Drake, Downing, & Krosnick, 1991; Sanbonmatsu & Fazio, 1990).

2. The formation of attitudes

Some researchers think attitudes have a genetic basis. Preston & De Waal (2002) found attitudes activating a certain branch of the motor cortex, which in turn supports certain behaviors. In other words our attitudes prepare us for action, and are in memory associated with other relevant emotions, beliefs, and behaviors. Tesser (1993) believed that at least some attitudes are linked to our genes. His study investigated identical twins that were raised in different environments and had no personal acquaintance with one another. These identical twins still had more attitudes in common than fraternal twins raised in the same home. In another study identical twins had more similar attitudes toward several attitude objects like the death penalty and music. How can that be? Are there gene behavior pathways that can be identified? These genetic pathways will probably not be discovered, as behavior is the consequence of many genes interacting with the environment. It would also appear more likely that genes affect broader personality characteristics like a person's temperament, and these in turn affect more specific attitudes. However, while we must recognize a role for genes, the vast amount of attitude research in social psychology focuses on the social environment as primarily responsible for the formation of specific attitudes.

3. Which component dominates?

Some attitudes are formed primarily by cognitive experiences. A person's attitude toward smoking may be a result of careful contemplations of convincing research that smoking causes cancer and death. Although the statistics for smoking behavior are dropping in some countries, they are alarmingly high in developing parts of the world like Asia. The World Health Organization expects that smoking may eventually kill 25 percent of all teenagers who start smoking in Asia, and a billion people will die from tobacco related diseases in the remaining 96 years of this century (Teeves, 2002). In just the United States smoking causes somewhere around 500,000 deaths each year. In addition to cancer, smoking may also cause impotence in males, and fertility problems in females. Some of these data have affected the cognitive component of attitudes toward smoking as half of the population in the United States smoked in 1950, whereas only 30 percent do so today. The cognitive component of attitudes includes all that we know about the attitude object, our beliefs, our memories, and images of the past. The cognitive component was predominant in affecting behavior for those who stopped smoking because they knew the research literature, and the effect of smoking on health

Some attitudes are predominantly affectively based, i.e. they involve emotional reactions to the object (Breckler, 1984; Zanna & Rempel, 1988; Bargh, Chaiken, Raymond, & Hymes, 1996). How much do we like smoking? Is it associated with pleasant images of friends or family, a ritual smoking session after dinner, and/or does nicotine produce pleasure associated with smoking. The fact that 30 percent of Americans still smoke would suggest that their attitudes are associated with emotional reactions to tobacco, along with cognitive defenses against the research that shows the negative effects.

For many people emotion is the primary determinant in attitudes toward a variety of objects. We have already noted how the popularity of political candidates is not stable, but frequently changes as a result of happenings in the larger world. How people feel toward a candidate is sometimes more important than what we think of his policies. In the US and probably other countries, people often vote as directed by their feelings, and often opt for policies which are contrary to their personal interests (Granberg & Brown, 1989). People still vote, although in decreasing numbers in the US, even when they know little about a party of choice or its policies. Political preferences are often based on some intuitive liking of the candidate or party, or based on family tradition.

Many attitudes simply express our basic value system, and have little to do with reason or facts (Maio & Olson, 1995; Schwartz, 1992). Some people have deep-seated values about the rights of the individual to self-destruct, and would reflexively vote against the control of cigarette smoking, or to place additional taxes on its sale. We could marshal much information about the negative effect of second hand smoke, and the need for additional taxes to cover the health hazards to smokers and others, but it would for some have no impact. This picture of intellectual indifference is not encouraging for those who believe in the advantages of democracy.

Some attitudes are based on our observation of our own behavior (Bem, 1972). Since we continue to smoke, so we reason, we must have a positive attitude toward smoking. This idea suggests that many people do not know how they feel or think about things until they have engaged in relevant behavior. You go to a beach for the first time, and come away feeling good, you observe this transformation in yourself and think “I have positive attitudes toward the coast”.

In the formation of our attitudes, different experiences may be more or less salient, and therefore some more easily accessible in memory. Some of these attitudes are cognitively related, and our memory therefore contains the necessary facts and experiences that sustain our predispositions. For other attitudes it is association with emotion that is significant. The pleasure of smoking, and the reinforcing role of peers and family, may provide rich emotional schemas that are difficult to change or remove. Finally, some attitudes are based on behavior. We have perhaps had direct experience with the consequence of smoking, lost a father or son, or we have personal health issues. These behavioral experiences may predominate in our attitudes toward smoking.

While a general consistency is present between the components of attitudes, there is no one-to-one relationship. In particular the relationship between attitudes and behavior is complex, as we shall see in a later section of this chapter.

4. Theories of attitude formation

Assuming that most attitudes are formed by experience, learning theory must play an important role in attitude formation. From this perspective attitudes are learned just like other habits (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). We learn the information associated with an attitude object, and we likewise learn our feelings.

The most basic principle is learning by mere association. This idea emerged from classical conditioning theory. Two objects are presented together; one associated with affect the other neutral. Learning theory suggests that we learn our attitudes from similar associations over time. A young person tries his first cigarette and feels acceptance from his peers. Smoking therefore becomes associated with approval and acceptance from others (though not necessarily from family). Reinforcement theory has also been applied to the learning of attitudes. If a behavior is followed by some reinforcement, other similar behaviors are likely to follow. In operant conditioning we are free to chose the behavior, but whether is sticks or not depends on whether it is followed by some reward (reinforcement). Is our smoking behavior followed by peer approval? Then it is likely to become a habit, as the drug nicotine also has very addictive properties.

Social learning theory suggests that we can also learn attitudes by mere imitation of behaviors. People tend to imitate the behavior of models (see e.g., Larsen, Coleman, Forbes, & Johnson, 1972). When the models are deemed authorities with legal status or admired, we often imitate their attitudes. Children are likely to imitate the political attitudes of parents if the relationship is good (Abramson, Baker, & Caspi, 2002). However, if we seek to dominate the opinions of others, reactance theory may come into play, and children may adopt attitudes that are opposite to those of their parents. In adolescence children are more likely to look to their peers as role models, and react in opposition to parental admonitions. We will come back to this more extensively in chapter 7 on conformity.

The different theories of learning, whether classical conditioning, reinforcement or social learning, all have a role to play in the formation of attitudes. In the case of attitudes what do we learn? We learn a message about the attitude object. Is the message from peers that smoking is cool and acceptable? Then positive attitudes may develop toward smoking and the behavior will follow. The whole field on persuasion deals with whether and under what conditions messages will be accepted and acted upon (McGuire, 1985; Moser, 1992).

In addition we also learn from the association with objects toward which we already have feelings. This is called the transfer effect (Krosnick, Jussim, & Lynn, 1992). Many times we just transfer our feelings from one object to another. We like Al Gore, and therefore like his environmental policies and agree that his work should be honored with the Nobel Peace Prize. What is called transfer effect is just another example of classical conditioning, where a stimulus that initiates an emotional response is paired with one that is neutral. Eventually the neutral response elicits the same or similar emotional responses (Olson & Fazio, 2001). Attitudes, based on classical or operant conditioning, are for the most part not rational. Logic does not play a role, other than helping select from memory the information that supports the attitude. Behavioral based attitudes on the other hand do require reflection. “I see my behavior” so I must have an attitude as self-perception theory reasons do require some cognitive integration and evaluation.

5. Functional and social influence theories of attitude formation and change
Katz (1960), and Katz & Stotland (1959) proposed a functional theory of attitude formation. Attitudes are formed and expressed because they serve certain functions and respond to specific needs in the individual. The functional theory addresses the why of attitudes, why we develop these psychological constructs? Functional theory also has implications for attitude change. By understanding the underlying needs addressed by attitudes our messages can be persuasive.

5.1 The Instrumental-utilitarian, ego-defensive, value-expressive, and knowledge *functions*

According to the instrumental function we develop attitudes because they serve us in some practical way. Workers develop positive attitudes toward labor unions because they believe that the unions will promote their welfare and their rights. Some attitudes have a very practical basis. The utilitarian function suggests that we learn early which attitudes are likely to bring rewards, and which attitudes are followed by punishment. Hence, sometimes we choose to express attitudes because they are social desirable or “politically correct”. As practical creatures we seek to maximize our gains, and develop those attitudes that have assisted us in social adjustment.

The second function is ego defensive. This function explains that many attitudes are developed in response to our personal insecurities and in order to maintain a positive self-image. Ego defenses serve to suppress unpleasant reality. Some think that our personal insecurities motivate all forms of prejudice (see e.g. Katz, 1960; Adams, Wright, & Lohr, 1996). White males may develop negative attitudes toward minorities or women because these groups are perceived to threaten them at some level, and prejudice helps the bigoted person feel better about him or herself by not having to confront personal weak spots. The ego defensive function serves in a similar manner**,** by keeping away from awareness those unpleasant realities that cause anxiety.

The value-expressive function suggests that our attitudes give expression to our more deeply held values. The peace activists value peace, and therefore develop specific negative attitudes toward war. Values reflect our basic orientation toward the world. We can value justice and that might determine our specific attitudes toward labor unions working for fairness in the workplace, or civil rights organizations seeking to reduce prejudice in society. Finally, the knowledge function is used to organize our reality and speed our decision-making. If we did not have an attitude toward products, we might spend endless time trying to decide which tooth paste to buy. Our knowledge based consumer attitudes derive from advertising in contemporary society. Consumer attitudes speed up the process of choice selection although the decision still might be mindless. Attitudes are formed because they serve basic functions as suggested by Katz (1960). Let us examine some of the research using his model as an outline. More contemporary researchers also recognize that attitudes serve basic psychological functions (Pratkanis, Breckler, & Greenwald, 1989).

5.2 Research on the instrumental-utilitarian function

Many attitudes are formed by our desire to obtain rewards and avoid punishments. We learn early that some aspects of our environment are rewarding and useful to us. We are likely to want to approach these objects with positive feelings. The teacher who rewards our efforts with excellent grades is more likely to be the object of our positive attitude, than those teachers who punish us for slovenly behavior. We are more likely to seek out a rewarding professor, use his assistance, and try to cultivate a relationship that may be beneficial in the long run.

Advertising employs similar means in utilizing persons and objects that have positive connotations, like using sexually alluring women to sell cars, or other consumer products. These advertising campaigns seek to associate a positively valued object with what is initially a neutral object. An attractive young lady (the positive object) is associated with a particular car. Car dealers hope that this association will also produce more positive attitudes toward the car, and therefore more sales.

Many other utilitarian attitudes are formed in a similar manner (Petty & Wegener, 1998; Pratkanis & Aronson, 2000). We learn to avoid objects because it helps in our survival. For example, we learn to avoid certain foods that contain toxins because often these foods leave a bitter taste. So our attitudes toward these foods also serve a utilitarian function (Profet, 1992). There are those who would maintain that even our preference for certain environments serve a utilitarian function. Most people have a preference for landscapes that include water, open space, with some uneven ground. These types of landscapes allowed our ancestors to hunt animals, obtain food and shelter, and avoid predators. Perhaps this nearly universal preference has served utilitarian functions in our distant past and may now be rooted in genetic based preferences (Orians & Heerwagen, 1999).

5.3 Research on the ego defensive function

Many attitudes are formed in response to personal insecurities and our need to avoid unpleasant facts about life and ourselves. The aim of ego defensive attitudes is to maintain a positive self-image and control our anxieties. Authoritarian attitudes were developed in response to fundamental insecurities in the individual, and therefore the willingness to submit to and value powerful significant others. Authoritarianism is of two kinds. Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford (1950) developed their theory of rightwing authoritarianism in an attempt to understand the holocaust. They believed that authoritarianism is a syndrome of attitudes and beliefs based largely on the content of rightwing worldviews as measured by the F (for fascism) scale. More recently Altemeyer (1988) has shown the continuous utility of the concept of right wing authoritarianism in the development of negative attitudes toward a bewildering set of victims including minorities. Rokeach (1960) developed his theory of dogmatism, in which closed mindedness and cognitive rigidity were essential components. Authoritarianism in Rokeach's theory was independent of the content of beliefs, and is manifested in both right and leftwing politics. Dogmatism is also found in religion and other important social ideologies. For Rokeach, authoritarianism is a matter of either having a closed or open mind, and the rejection of others is based on belief incongruence. Both types of authoritarianism are thought to emerge out of personal insecurities (Larsen, 1969; Schwendiman & Larsen, 1970).

Research established links between authoritarianism and many forms of insecurity (Larsen, 1969). In one study (Schwendiman & Larsen (1970) birth order was found to be a factor in the authoritarian personality. Authoritarian traits were also predictive of the preference for presidential candidates in the 1968 election (Larsen, 1970) and the 1976 presidential election (Brant, Larsen, & Langenberg, 1978). Authoritarian attitudes also favored mandatory sterilization (Larsen, 1976). Likewise authoritarianism was related to negative white attitudes toward Aborigines in Australia (Larsen, 1978; Larsen, 1981), and found to be a component in general theories of prejudice and social judgment (Larsen, 1970a; Larsen, 1971c).

One interesting thought about the development of ego defensive attitudes is contained in the studies done on terror management (Arndt, Greenberg, & Cook, 2002; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, Solomon, Rosenblatt, Veeder, & Kirkland, 1990; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, Solomon, Simon, & Breus, 1994). These researchers suggest that all people face the existential dilemma of mortality. We all die, a thought you probably do not dwell on a great length. On the one hand, we seem to have a great desire for self-preservation, on the other hand we are aware of the certainty of death. This existential dilemma causes overwhelming anxiety that is expressed in a variety of attitudes. These attitudes function to protect us from the terror brought on by our unpleasant reality. Many attitudes are formed, these researchers think, to allow us some escape from our mortality. Some people believe that they will live after death, which in turn motivates attitudes toward a variety of religions. Religions, as we know, are supposed to reserve a place for us in the afterlife provided we follow certain prescriptions.

The main idea is that we are searching for something larger than our individual lives. Some feelings of permanence may also come from being part of groups or traditions with a long history. Traditions that are helpful in terror management include those of family, culture, and those found in the major religions. In contributing to these we may feel there is something that survives our individual lives, and makes our existence meaningful. Other people create literature or write books (like this book) in the search for some permanence or symbolic immortality. According to the theory of terror management, we manage our anxiety through a variety of attitudes that all serve the function of pushing out the thoughts of the impending doom. Our attitudes toward religion, culture, and literature, and our creative work, are all attempts to push away the fears associated with mortality. Perhaps drug and alcohol abuse, and reliance on recreational diversions serve similar functions. Sartre once said, "there is no escape" as we either face the existential anxiety associated with our mortality, or neurotic anxiety associated with our feeble attempts at escape. Many attitudes are undoubtedly formed as a result of the grand dilemma of life.

5.4 Research on the value function

Often attitudes are formed because they give expression to our underlying and deeply held values. Many attitudes are expressed in our support for our reference groups. Whether of a political, cultural, or religious nature, these groups matter to us, and help us identify our values and therefore are fundamental to specific attitudes. Parents obviously matter in the development of values, and therefore it should not surprise us that many children support the same political party as that of their parents (Niemi & Jennings, 1991). In general, conservative groups attract those who are committed to free enterprise, whereas liberal groups are more motivated by the values of equality (Hunter, 1991). The pioneering project that demonstrated the changing role of reference groups in attitude formation was the historical Bennington College study of student attitudes (Newcomb, 1958). The students' parents were generally conservative in political beliefs and values, but the college was more left leaning. The question was which reference group's values would prevail in developing the students lasting political attitudes?

As it turned out it was the college experience that was the more influential in forming lasting attitudes. The students' initial conservative views changed over the course of staying in the college environment. A follow up study showed that these liberal attitudes held for the long run. Even 25 years later the majority continued to hold liberal views. Obviously parents were still a reference group, but as could be expected peers and the college environment had a powerful influence in the formation of more liberal attitudes. Perhaps this knowledge is the basis for the creation of many religious universities where students will not be confronted with ideas different from those of their parents.

5.5 Research on the knowledge function

As already mentioned our attitudes guide our behavior and thereby make our decisions more efficient. On the whole we tend to remember information that is consistent with our attitudes (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998). This has very broad implications for information processing. Our attitudes promote the selective use of memory and perception, and help us sort out the information which is consistent with our attitudes. We tend to think more highly of information that supports our attitudes. In a sense therefore, for many significant attitudes, our knowledge is highly selective and reflects mainly information that will not contradict our cherished views. We maintain positive self-images by remembering only those events that support this image (Greenwald, 1980). For example, we selectively interpret the behavior of minority groups to support our preexisting prejudices (Hamilton & Trolier, 1986). Many of our attitudes are formed in response to our need to cognitively organize the world in accordance with our worldviews and values.

6. The measurement of attitudes

Much of the preceding would make no sense unless we have ways of measuring attitudes formed in a variety of ways, and serving many functions. It would also be impossible to understand attitude change, except in some behavioral sense, unless we could use instruments to calculate any change over time. Although some attempts have been made at developing multidimensional scales, unidimensional scales are still the primary vehicles through which to study attitudes. Each of the four methods described below were invented to answer specific measurement problems.

One important issue in attitude measurement is unidimensionality. Does the attitude scale measure a single dimension and include statements that cover the range from very positive to very negative toward the attitude object? In other words out of the attitude universe of all possible statements about an attitude object, which items are "related" to one another, and fall along such a single dimension. Generally item analysis, correlating each item to the total test score, is used to find those items that correlate highest, and therefore contribute most to the attitude measured. Other methods can also be applied to determine unidimensionality, including assessments of overall reliability using alpha coefficients and factor analysis to examine the underlying structure of the scale items.

Reliability is another essential issue in scale construction. This concept addresses the issue of consistency. Will the results obtained by the scale be the same a month from now as in the original administration (test-retest method). Other forms of reliability are internal split-half reliability where we correlate the sum of the odd numbered items with the even numbered items of our survey. If reliability were high we would expect high correlations between the two halves of the scale. Split-half reliability employes the Spearman Brown prophecy formula to compensate for using only half of the items in the scale, as test reliability is related to the length of the test. In more recent years we have employed an estimate of overall intercorrelations of the items called the alpha coefficient.

Validity is a concept that refers to whether the scale measures what it purports to measure. If we are measuring attitudes toward nuclear weapons, is that what we really are measuring and not some other peripheral object? Validity can be measured by construct relationships asking whether the scale correlates in predictable ways with already established measures? It is also possible to use the scale in known group procedures. Can the scale discriminate the attitudes of two or more groups that are known a priori to have different attitudes? Are the mean differences significant and in the predicted direction?

Reproducibility is related to unidimensionality. It concerns the ability to reproduce responses on the scale knowing a respondent's overall attitude score. If a person agrees with say a negative item, he should also agree with all the items that are less negative. The reproducibility coefficient is therefore also a measure of the unidimensionality of the scale.

6.1 The first start: the Bogardus scale

Bogardus (1925) can be credited with the first attempt to objectively determine attitudes by means of his social distance scale. In this scale he would ask the following: According to my first feeling-reaction, I would willingly admit members of each race (as a class, and not the best I have known, nor the worst members), to one or more of the classifications that I have circled.

This would then be followed with a listing of a variety of national and ethnic groups along the vertical axis, and the following descriptions along the horizontal: To close kinship by marriage (1); to my club as personal chums (2); to my street as neighbors (3); to employment in my occupation (4); to citizenship in my country (5); as visitors to my country (6); and would exclude from my country (7).

Essentially Bogardus sought to measure prejudice by examining the relative social distance the individual felt toward various groups. As can be observed it is a unidimensional scale of social distance, and therefore is useful in obtaining some overall idea of stereotypical prejudice in various populations. On the other hand we have no evidence of the scale's reliability, nor does it assess the content of people's attitudes. The social distance scale is useful in ordering groups of people. Social distance can be found for ethnic minorities in terms of their acceptability to the majority. The acceptability of the majority to the minority may also be determined by including it among several national groups.

6.2 Thurstone scaling

Thurstone and Chave (1929) responded to some of the measurement challenges by developing a scale of "equal appearing intervals". This method requires first the development of a large number of statements representing different points along the unidimensional scale. Some items are formulated extremely positive, others moderately positive, some moderately negative, and some extremely negative. From this initial item pool Thurstone constructed the attitude universe by developing a scale of items with 11 points ranging from extremely positive to extremely negative toward the attitude object. A large pool perhaps 200 statements was edited in order to remove ambiguity (Edwards & Kenney, 1946; Edwards, 1957). Each of the 200 participants would go through a so-called judgment procedure. They read each individual item and placed it on the 11-point continuum according to its direction and intensity. From these judgments the experimenter determined where each item belonged on the continuum. First he calculated the median of responses for each item. The median is the point that divides the total number of judgments in half. Each item with a scale (median) value was subsequently placed at equidistant points along the continuum. Some statements were judged at point 1 on the scale, others 2, etc. Those items that did not fall at or close to one of the points on the scale were eliminated. At the end this resulted in about 80 plus items and so each point on the scale was represented by 7 or 8 items.

The remaining statements were subjected to a q-value analysis (see e.g. Blalock, 2006: 72-78). Q-values are the 75^{th} percentile minus the 25^{th} percentile, and are therefore a measure of the spread of the middle 50 percent of the judgments. Only the middle of the range of judgments is used, as the extremes are considered careless assessments. For example for an item having a scale value of 6, those who placed the item in categories 1 or 2, or 10 or 11, were either unable to do the judging task, or were careless judges. The larger the q-value result found, the less agreement among the judges on where to place the statement. Clearly, therefore, the q value is a measure of the ambiguity of the item, and the less ambiguous the better the agreement.

During the next step, the items within each of the 11 groups are then ordered according to the size of the q value, and two alternative items are defined from those with the lowest q values. To assess the reliability of the scale, we correlate the alternative forms. For validity we can use construct validity correlating our scale with established scales with known validity. Are the correlations significant and in the predicted direction? Criterion groups can also be used to see if the mean differences between groups known to have different attitudes are significant and in the predicted direction. If we are developing a scale on attitudes toward e.g. homosexuality, we might administer the scale to a gay rights group, and a conservative religious group. If the scale was valid, the gay rights group would be found to have significantly more positive attitudes when compared to the conservative group. Commonly, each form of the scale would have 22 statements, two for each point of the scale.

The scale is then ready for use. The respondents would indicate agreement with those items that correspond to their attitude, and the attitude score would be the summation of the scale values of all the items with which they agree. Although the Thurstone scale provides us with a unidimensional scale, and may have satisfactory reliability and validity, it is also a very time consuming method. Would it be possible to develop a scaling method that has comparable reliability and validity, but is less cumbersome?

6.3 The Likert scale

The Likert (1932) method responds to this concern and has been found to correlate highly with Thurstone scales suggesting they measure the same domains (Oppenheim, 1966). At the same time the Likert method is much less laborious in development. Recall that in Thurstone we asked the respondents to judge each item according to its place on the 11-point continuum. In the Likert method we ask people to base their judgments on their own attitudes. For Thurstone we asked for objective judgments as to where the item belonged whereas for the Likert method we ask for agreement or disagreement with the item presented.

As with Thurstone, we start with a large number of statements that reflect the attitude universe of interest. These statements are then edited according to Edwards' (1957) a priori criteria to remove ambiguity. These criteria demand that statements should be simple not complex, should be short rarely exceeding 20 words, should refer to a single object not several, and so forth. After editing the statements they are placed in a survey in random order. Since about half are written as negative toward the object, and the other half as positive, it is important to maintain random order to avoid response biases. The response categories are typically five from agree strongly (5), agree (4), uncertain (3), disagree (2), and disagree strongly (1). Each of the weights are then summed up across the item pool but only after the weights for the negatively keyed items are reversed to ensure that the overall score is representative of the item pool and all the items are scored in the same direction.

A further effort to eliminate items that are ambiguous or do not contribute to the attitude is carried out by means of item analysis (part-whole correlations), or alpha coefficients. The resulting scale may have 20 to 30 items, approximately half of which are positive, and half negative. The scale is then submitted to a sample, and split- half and/or alpha correlations are calculated to ascertain scale reliability. Assessing validity is done with either construct coefficients, or by using known groups to predict mean differences.

The advantage of both Thurstone and the Likert methods over Bogardus is that both tell us something about the content of peoples' attitudes. The advantage of the Likert method over Thurstone is that it is much easier to develop. Neither method, however, addresses the problem of reproducibility. The same overall score can be obtained in several ways, and so we do not have a direct way to assess unidimensionality. This was the contribution of Guttman & Suchman (1947).

6.4 Guttman and Mokken scaling

The Guttman scale was developed to address the problem of reproducibility and unidimensionality. Does the scale you have developed represent an ordinal set of items that fall along a single dimension? Do these items form a cumulative scale, so if we know the respondent's overall score we also know all the items to which he would agree on a perfect scale? Given that scales are not perfect Guttman developed a coefficient of reproducibility to determine whether the scale meets minimal criteria, usually a coefficient of .90. If the Guttman procedure is applied to a Thurstone scale, we will know exactly from the respondent's scale score, with which items the respondent has agreed, and with which items he/she has disagreed. The coefficient of reproducibility is an estimate of how close the scale comes to reproducibility in an imperfect scale, and is found with the following formula: R= 1-Number of errors/number of responses, where the number of errors is deviations away from perfect reproducibility.

The Mokken Scale Procedure (MSP) computes a measure of scalability (Loevinger's H) for each single item and for a set of items. In general, an item is considered a part of a cumulative scale if it reaches or surpasses a value of .30. The analysis can be employed to dichotomous scales like Thurstone's agree or disagree format (Mokken, 1991), or to polychotomous items like the five point Likert scale (Sijtsma & Molenaar, 1996) and is essentially a probabilistic version of Guttman scale analysis (Dunn-Rankin, Knezek, Wallace, & Zhang, 2004). As a result of MSP the resulting scale items are ranked according to their 'difficulty' (the average percentage of agreement with the item). The lower the average agreement, the more 'difficult' the item, and the more amount of the attitude is needed to agree with it.

7. Some contemporary examples of measures and attitudes

Attitude scales have been developed in order to study a variety of social topics. For example, attributed power (Larsen & Minton, 1971); integration (Larsen, 1974); women's liberation (Larsen, Cary, Chaplin, Deane, Green, Hyde, & Zuleger, 1976); attitudes toward homosexuality (Larsen, Reed, & Hoffman, 1980); toward rape (Larsen, 1988); toward aids victims (Larsen, 1990); and toward illegal immigration (Ommundsen & Larsen, 1997; Ommundsen & Larsen, 1999; Ommundsen, Hak, Mørch, Larsen, & Van der Veer, 2002; Van der Veer, Ommundsen, Larsen, Van Le, Krumov, Pernice, & Romans, 2004; Van der Veer, Ommundsen, Larsen, Krumov, & Van Le, 2007; Ommundsen, Van der Veer, Larsen, Krumov, & Van Le, 2007). Scales offer an opportunity to establish the reliability, the validity, and the content of attitudes. These are the major advantages of scales over single item surveys. Single item surveys are furthermore often confounded by the wording of a statement. Slight changes in the wording can create widely discrepant results, and confound the evaluation and significance of the attitude. Where possible, therefore, the researcher should use the Likert method for developing a scale, and check its unidimensionality by applying e.g. the Mokken analysis to the results.

8. Explicit and implicit attitudes

Attitudes can be present either explicitly or implicitly. Explicit attitudes are those we know exist within ourselves, of which we are conscious, and about which we can report. Explicit attitudes produce rapid responses to the attitude object. We could ask a question like "what do you think about women's liberation", and most women would have an explicit attitude toward that topic.

Some attitudes are implicit, we are hardly aware of them (Fazio & Olson, 2003; Wilson, Lindsey, & Schooler, 2000). We might endorse very progressive views on tolerance toward other groups in our society while maintaining feelings of discomfort toward these groups. The former is our explicit attitude that we present to the world, the latter are our implicit predispositions (Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002). We are only now beginning to understand the conceptual difference between explicit and implicit attitudes, but it is important to know that psychologically speaking our attitudes can be split. At one level they are explicit and conscious, but at another more unconscious level, we may hold attitudes that are very different (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998; Greenwald & Nosek, 2001). We should keep this difference in mind since the research reviewed in this chapter is based on explicit attitudes.

9. Attitudes as predictors of behavior

In the early history of social psychology, scholars were confronted with a study that caused great concern. It showed that attitudes had apparently little to do with behavior. LaPiere (1934) spent two years traveling around the U.S. with a young Chinese couple visiting hotels, camping grounds and restaurants. Out of the 251 establishments they visited, they were only denied service at one establishment. This surprised LaPiere, as there were strong negative prejudices toward Asians and Chinese in the U.S. Many of these negative views were based on stereotypes of Chinese laborers brought in to build the railroads or to run laundry services in the cities. Most people in fact had not had any personal experience with Chinese so as to form affect-based attitudes.

After these visits, LaPiere wrote to all 251 establishments and asked for their policies with regard to “Orientals”. Of the 128 that replied, 92 percent wrote back to say it was against their policy to serve people from Asia, a result totally opposite to what LaPiere had actually experienced. As only one establishment said to welcome Asians, LaPiere’s study suggested that while negative stereotypes were strong, evidently they did not predict behavior. This study is always cited to indicate the lack of correspondence between behavior and attitudes. Other studies in the following decades came up with similar discrepancies, and led some to believe that there were no stable underlying attitudes which determined verbal reactions or behavior (Wicker, 1969).

During the last decades there have been done several meta-analyses concerning the relationship between attitudes and behavior (see Glasman & Albarracin, 2006 for an overview). Eckes and Six (1994) examined the influence of measurement correspondence, time interval between attitude and behavior measures, number of behavior alternatives, and behavioral domain. They investigated the results of 501 studies, published in 59 journals between 1920 and 1990. They found the highest mean correlation between behavior and behavioral intention was ($r=.54$) and the lowest between attitude and behavior ($r=.49$). Hence they found some moderators in the relationship between attitude and behavior. The number of behavior alternatives (in case of two alternatives the correlation is obviously higher than in case more alternatives are available) and the way of measuring behavior (in case of self-report the correlation is much higher than with objective measurement) are examples of such moderators. Also the domain matters very much. The correlation between attitude and behavior (objectively measured) is high when it concerns the domain of political participation ($r=.68$) and low when it concerns the domain of altruism ($r=.20$). However, these results still leave much open about what might cause discrepancies between attitude and behavior.

These attitude-behavior inconsistency results came at a time when researchers also found that personality traits failed to predict behavior. Many asked whether there was a total disconnection between what people said and what they did, and if attitudes really did not determine anything?

To assess this question it is important to understand what really took place in the LaPiere study. LaPiere traveled through the country with a well dressed, and attractive Chinese couple. The couple did not fit the stereotype of the white prejudicial mind. Therefore, when faced with this couple, most establishments could not react stereotypically when confronted with this situation. In responding to the request for service the immediate situation overpowered any stereotypes guiding their thinking. In fact, LaPiere did not study affect-based attitudes, but rather stereotypes that only elicit behavior in combination with social support. Behavior is not only determined by attitudes, and attitudes can hence not predict behavior.

10. Other influences that compete with attitudes and cause attitude behavior inconsistency

Human beings are complex and our behavior, our attitude, and the relationship between behavior and attitude are the result of many factors. Social psychologists have counted up to 40 different factors that may influence the relationship between attitudes and behavior (Triandis, 1982; Kraus, 1991). A major determinant of inconsistency between the two is social desirability. We often hide our views from others for fear that they will not be acceptable. Our fear of rejection or experiencing other forms of punishment cause us to moderate our responses. We do not always tell truth to power, because power may not like to hear what we have to say, and consequences can be painful. We may not tell others of our alcohol or drug use, because of the shame associated with these behaviors, so researchers have to use alternative ways to get to the truth (Roese & Jamieson, 1991).

10.1 Attitudes may compete with other determinants of behavior

Any behavior is a consequence of many competing factors, including what we saw as situational pressures in the LaPiere study. As we face decisions in any given situation, we must remember both our explicit attitudes and the situation confronting us. For example, religious attitudes are poor predictors of church attendance. What are the competing factors that affect people who are religious so they do not attend religious services? Perhaps they are religious, but their family or friends are not, and pressure you to not attend. Maybe they have to work when religious services are performed. For any behavior, we can think of similar reasons for the lack of attitude-behavior consistency. At least at the short-term, when we examine religious behaviors over time, then attitudes predict behaviors quiet well. Therefore we have to examine long- term effects, and average behaviors, rather than individual acts to determine attitude-behavior consistency (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974; Kahle & Berman, 1979).

10.2 Attitudes specific to the behavior

Many of the early studies tried to establish relationships between general attitudes, and very specific behaviors. For example, in LaPiere's study the request for service involved a very specific decision regarding a well-dressed Chinese couple that did not fit the prejudicial stereotype. The question measuring "attitudes" in the post meeting survey was a very general question referring to "Orientals". Indeed where studied, general attitudes do not predict specific behaviors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; Ajzen, 1982). However, where the measured attitude is directly relevant to the situation, attitudes do predict behavior. For example, general attitudes toward the environment do not predict recycling behavior, but attitudes toward recycling do (Oskamp, 1991). To establish the true relationship of attitudes to behavior we must measure attitudes that are specific to the behavior being studied. In one study women were asked about their attitudes toward birth control (Davidson & Jaccard, 1979). The survey included both very general questions like what they thought in general about birth control, but also specific questions such as what they thought about using birth control pills. The researchers waited two years before again contacting the women. The results showed that the general questions did not relate to behavior. Again this result most likely occurred because the general attitude question measured only stereotypic responses to which the individual had little emotional commitment. On the other hand specific questions about birth control pills did strongly predict their subsequent use. The lesson learned: we must measure attitudes toward specific behaviors to obtain good behavior-attitude consistency.

Broader social attitude studies are also useful as they provide information on widespread beliefs serving as the social context of behavior (Fraser & Gaskell, 1990). Broad social attitudes provide a framework that identifies the content of beliefs and feelings, without which we cannot ask the specific questions, or determine need for attitude change. Attitude scales that broadly define attitudes are also important for the development of theories in social psychology. They describe how variables correlate, and in what direction. These attitude and behavioral relationships can help us understand the stereotypic norms of society that control behaviors that are not obvious. We suspect that voting behavior in the US and the Western world is often just based on feelings of liking in turn produced by stereotypical advertisement by political parties. As we can see, broad or general attitudes can be of great significance with consequences for both the individual and society. However, broad attitude measurement must show fidelity to the object being measured and demonstrate validity at least from the point of construct assurance. General attitudes predict general behaviors. There must be a match between the attitude measured and the predicted behavior.

So, regardless whether the attitude measured is considered broad or specific, attitudes predict best when both the attitude scale and behavior are at the same level of specificity. Scales that are highly specific do a better job at predicting highly specific behavior; those that are general or broad do a better job in predicting broad behaviors (Ajzen, 1987). Remember, in the survey on attitudes toward birth control only those questions that asked specifically about attitudes toward the use of birth control pills (not birth control in general) predicted the use of pills subsequently (Davidson & Jaccard, 1979). In the LaPiere study, if the respondents had been asked, "will you serve a well dressed Chinese couple that is fluent in English", perhaps the results would have been very different.

10.3 Other sources for behavior-attitude inconsistency

Not all attitude components are consistent. It happens at times that we have feelings of dislike and yet think positively about the target person or issue. In several studies, students rated their attitudes toward participating in psychological experiments. Some felt positive, but did not think it would help them in any way; others felt positive and thought it might help their grades or their other academic goals. Those who had consistent attitudes and were positive in both feelings and thought were more likely to participate in the experiments (Chaiken & Baldwin, 1981).

Some attitudes we learn second hand from our educational system or other cultural institutions. Remember the inconsistency in the LaPiere study! This might well have occurred because the stereotypes then prominent in American society were not based on actual encounters with Asian people, but learned second hand through the biased widespread beliefs in society. It should therefore be no surprise that attitudes based on real life encounters are more salient and powerful predictors of a person's behavior. The effect of personal experience has been demonstrated in several experiments. Regan & Fazio (1977) compared student attitudes toward university housing shortage. One group consisted of those who were made personally uncomfortable as a consequence of the crisis by having to stay in emergency or temporary housing. Another group consisted of those who had read or otherwise heard about the crisis. Students who had actually experienced the crisis first hand were more likely to engage in relevant behaviors such as signing petitions, when compared to those whose attitudes were second hand. These results have been confirmed in other studies (Fazio & Zanna, 1978; Davidson, Yantis, Norwood, & Montana, 1985).

10.4 Accessible attitudes

Sometimes we are asked to respond immediately to a situation, and if our attitude is accessible, we can make rapid responses. Recently the first author was approached to sign a petition to put on the next election ballot a proposal for universal health care in the state of Oregon. This is an issue toward which he is very sympathetic, and it took him little time to agree and sign the petition. Some salient attitudes produce very rapid and spontaneous responses; they are very accessible in our minds. Other issues are of less concern. He had few opinions on the make or models of cars to buy. Only after buying a car did he develop an attitude toward the purchased car, but previous to his purchase his attitudes were not readily accessible. A study on consumer behavior demonstrated this effect (Fazio, Powell, & Williams, 1989; Fazio, 2000). The participants rated various consumer products, and accessibility was determined by the time it took to respond to a particular product. In this study only if attitudes came quickly to mind were they related to actual behavior.

10.5 Automatic attitudes

Some attitudes function more or less automatically (remember the discussion on automatic thinking in chapter 4). Sometimes a word or image may activate an attitude and make it accessible. In that situation we do not take the time to evaluate the positive or negative of the proposed behavior, we simply act. Support for the presence of automatic attitudes is found in several studies (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996; Dijksterhuis & Van Knippenberg, 1998). In a sense these behaviors are so automatic that they bypass our conscious attitudes.

10.6 How do attitudes predict behavior?

As we can see from the previous discussion, attitudes compete with many influences in determining behavior. Many of us do not act purely on our attitudes, but are influenced by what we think is appropriate or normative behavior. Ajzen & Fishbein (1980) proposed a theory of reasoned action. It assumes that people consciously choose to behave in certain ways depending on both their attitudes plus their understanding of the norms regarding appropriate behavior, or what the researchers called subjective norms. Attitudes together with relevant subjective norms produce behavioral intentions that in turn predict behavior. In a study on breast-feeding, attitudes together with subjective norms (e.g. what the mother in-law thought of breast feeding) best predicted the actual behavior (Manstead, Profitt, & Smart, 1983).

Later Ajzen (1985, 1996) proposed a theory of planned behavior. In addition to attitudes and subjective norms, Ajzen proposed the variable of perceived behavioral control. Did the participant believe they could perform the behavior? If not, the attitude and norms would have little effect. Several studies have found support for this expanded theory in a variety of behaviors including dieting (Ajzen & Madden, 1986; Sheeran & Taylor, 1999).

10.7 Some conclusions on behavior-attitude consistency

The aforementioned research supports several conclusions. If we are dealing with specific behaviors, then attitudes toward these behaviors, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, may increase our ability to predict the behavior. Examples of predictable behaviors include the use of seat belts in cars, and the use of condoms when having sex (Albarracin, Johnson, Fishbein, & Muellerleile, 2001; Armitage & Conner, 2001). Prompting people's attitudes may also increase consistency (Zanna, Olson, & Fazio, 1981), and anything that increases self-awareness of attitudes may also contribute the predictability of attitudes (Gibbons, 1978; Diener & Wallbom, 1976).

11. Why do attitudes follow behavior?

We know that sales people change customer attitudes by the foot-in-the-door technique. If people agree to perform behaviors that are not too demanding, they are more likely to consent to the larger requests that follow. In the Freedman & Fraser (1966) study, the researchers initially asked for a small favor, placing a three-inch sign about traffic safety in their windows. When these participants were approached three weeks later and asked to place a crudely made and ugly sign on their front lawns, 76 percent agreed, as compared to 17 percent from a group that had not been previously approached. What happened? Apparently, behaving in a small way favoring traffic safety changed their attitudes in more significant ways. So attitudes do follow behavior!

Other studies showed similar patterns. People willing to wear a small pin to support cancer research were compared to another group not asked to wear the pin. The group that agreed to wear the pin were later more likely to contribute money to cancer research. Voters who said yes when asked if they intended to vote were 41 percent more likely to actually vote compared to a control group not asked the question (Greenwald, Carnot, Beach, & Young, 1987). These studies show that responding to a small request, behaving in small and apparently insignificant ways, causes broader changes in attitudes. After the initial non-demanding behavior the individual responds to larger requests. The individual would not have agreed to the demanding request without the prior behavioral commitment.

The roles people play affect their attitudes. Individuals raised to supervisory status change their attitudes substantially as a consequence. Research shows that these previous workers become more sympathetic to management positions in their new roles. Called upon to perform a new role, attitudes changed to be consistent with new expectations (Lieberman, 1956). When people act in their roles, attitudes follow. We seem to believe our behavior. Military people quickly adopt military attitudes. Although they are the ones who suffer most in wartime, they typically hold the most pro war attitudes, because how else can they justify the risks that they and their comrades take. Attitudes are formed as a result of the roles we play in society. Whether we are students or teachers, we develop attitudes consistent with our roles. Eventually the individual becomes incapable of distinguishing between his role and his personal behaviors as they become one and the same.

In a similar way, when our roles or social situations compel us to say something, we eventually come to believe what we say. Most of us are aware of common attitudes, social taboos, and norms, and we adjust our speech accordingly. We try to speak in ways that please the listener (Tetlock, 1981), and tend to adjust our communications toward what we believe is the listener's position (Manis, Cornell, & Moore, 1974; Tetlock, 1984). Eventually, saying something becomes believing, and our attitudes become consistent with our talk. We form our language toward our listener's perceived position and come subsequently to believe the new message. Inconsistency between talk and attitudes would create too much dissonance for most people.

We can observe appalling consequences in wartime. Aided by official propaganda, soldiers often develop callous and inhuman attitudes toward their supposed enemy. Normal people justify immoral acts by devaluing the supposed enemy, and by increasing social distance. Those who commit genocide are often normal decent human beings in civilian life, but come out of war theaters with cynical attitudes toward human life. During slavery, common people accepted the morality of other people being held in involuntary bondage. During the American war on Vietnam, soldiers described the Vietnamese as “gooks” thereby dehumanizing the “enemy”, and justifying their behavior.

This inconsistency-reduction does not always last. Veterans in the United States have since the war dealt with issues of delayed stress syndrome. One theory is that soldiers participated in horrible events, but these were inconsistent with more deeply held values. The inconsistency was suppressed for many years, but typically at great psychological cost to the individual. For some at least, the evil acts produced more cynical attitudes, and their conscience came back to haunt the individual many years after the behavior.

That attitude follows behavior can also be observed in political movements in their manipulations of populations. In Nazi Germany we saw the people participating in a variety of behaviors supporting the regime. Mass rallies with hypnotic martial music, parades using flags and other national symbols, the German salute of the raised arm, all of these behaviors were powerful conditioning devices. The seductive behavior changed German attitudes to the point that only few opposed, and even fewer spoke out against the Nazi’s. Probably all societies have similar conditioning rituals, and politicians use these to win support for policies and political goals. That is certainly true in the Western world. For example in the U.S., school children are often required to say a pledge of allegiance to the state, sing the national anthem, and salute the flag at all school events. Other countries like the Netherlands and Norway may use different and less strong conditioning to obtain compliance with minimal social objectives. These are all attempts to use public conformity to inculcate broader attitudes toward “patriotism”.

Although many say, “you cannot legislate morals”, in fact the evidence shows the opposite. We can encourage normative behavior, and often attitude change follows. If we, for example, examine attitude changes in the southern United States toward Blacks we see huge changes as a result of legislative and other legitimate action enforcing laws on racial equality (Larsen, 1971). Tolerance seems to follow laws that enforce tolerance and equal treatment. We also have evidence that when we act positively toward someone it increases liking of that person. Further, if we do a favor for someone it increases liking for the person we have benefited (Blanchards & Cook, 1976).

12. Theories of why attitudes follow behavior

In the previous discussion we have alluded to why attitudes follow behavior. Let us now discuss the major theories developed in social psychology to explain the behavior-attitude consistence. These include Cognitive Dissonance theory which suggests that consistency derives from psychological discomfort of dissonance; Self-perception theory which states that we look to our behavior to understand our attitudes; Self-presentation-theory proposing that attitudes reflect image management and our desire to appear consistent to others; and Expectancy-value theory which indicates that attitudes are formed in a process of weighing the pro's and con's of our predispositions.

Theories of cognitive consistency

What explanations can we offer for why, over time, our outward behavior gives way to deeply felt convictions. How is it that people try to make their attitudes consistent with their behaviors? As will be seen, the following theories are essentially theories of rationalizations as the individual tries to understand his attitudes by the experiences that follow from situations and the environment.

Balance theory

Heider (1946) was the first to develop a psychological balance theory. He contended that people seek to maintain a balance between their beliefs, "sentiments", and other people. Heider posited that balance existed in triads consisting of the person (P), another person (O), and some object (X). For each of the three components of the triad it is possible to envision a positive or negative relationship. The two people may like each other, be friends, but they may like the object or not. If John likes Peter, but does not like Peter's political views, something has to give. John can, for example, change his opinion of Peter and like him less then the relationship is in balance since John's negative views of Peter correspond to his negative views of Peter's political opinions. John can also evaluate his political opinions, and come to realize that Peter is right in holding these. Now we are, according to Heider, in balance again as the positive attitude toward Peter corresponds to the new positive attitude toward Peter's political opinion. Some researchers have supported balance theory in that people are more favorable toward and remember balance relationships better than those not balanced (Hummert, Crockett, & Kemper, 1990; Insko, 1984).

Cognitive dissonance theory

Heider's theory was seen by many as too limiting in evaluating the complexity of behavior, since it dealt with only triads. Festinger (1957) followed with his theory of cognitive dissonance that dealt with cognitive balance within one person. In a way similar to Heider, Festinger argued that people do not like imbalance in thought or relationships, and will behave in ways to restore balance. He contended that people in dissonance experienced unpleasant feelings that in turn motivated the change of either beliefs or behavior to remove the dissonance. The unpleasant feelings motivate us to change something in ourselves or in the environment. Although vague, Festinger maintained that dissonance occurs when a person experiences the "opposite" of a given belief or cognition. Put in another way, we feel unpleasant tension occur when two beliefs or thoughts are not psychologically consistent. They somehow do not fit or are incompatible.

You like smoking and feel positive toward this social habit, but you have learned you might die early if you continue. What to do? You could stop smoking, and then your behavior would be in consonant with your beliefs. Smoking causes addiction though, so some may find quitting difficult. Dissonance theory would suggest that when we feel the inconsistency we would also feel the pressure to change our beliefs and /or feelings. In a British survey (Eiser, Sutton, & Wober, 1979) smokers were in denial. They resolved the dissonance between desire and health by disagreeing with the assertion that smoking is dangerous. The dangers of smoking had been exaggerated the addicted seemed to say. Some smokers would argue that they knew people who smoked every day of their adult lives and yet lived to see a hundred years. Smoker's rationalized their behavior and tried to find good reasons to continue the habit. Rationalizations reduce dissonance if they are sincerely believed. Do you think many smokers truly believe in their dissonance reduction efforts?

12.1 Reducing dissonance in our lives

We often reduce dissonance after making important decisions by selectively finding reasons to support our choice. In similar ways we find reasons to downgrade the not chosen alternative. We constantly try to assure ourselves that we have displayed wisdom in our choices. Any decision that is important creates some dissonance (Brehm, 1956), and we therefore usually change some cognition.

For example, you bought a new car, but had doubts about the wisdom of the purchase. To remove the dissonance, you looked for information that permitted you to rationalize your decision. Some advertising, for example, showed that the car is highly ranked in consumer satisfaction. In addition the car has many surprising and delightful features that pleases you, so now you are a happy costumer and your dissonance is removed.

Many experiments show this tendency for customers to rationalize their decisions (Knox & Inkster, 1968). The aforementioned study showed that people's confidence in a horse bet on at the racetrack increased after the purchase of a betting ticket. On the way to the betting counter gamblers were unsure, feeling the dissonance of the impending decision: would the horse run as they hoped? However, after the purchase the bettors expressed great confidence in their choice. Making difficult decisions triggers uncertainty, produces dissonance and activates the rationalization process. This includes also behavior before and after voting (Regan & Kilduff, 1988). Recent research shows that the rationalization process may even begin before the decision is taken to minimize any resulting dissonance (Wilson, Wheatley, Kurtz, Dunn, & Gilbert, 2004). Dissonance reduction does not necessarily occur at a conscious level. As soon as we have subconsciously made a decision, we selectively evaluate and seek out supporting information in order to justify our decision (Brownstein, 2003; Simon, Krawczyk, & Holyoak, 2004).

In many cases, we make decisions that involve substantial effort, but are nevertheless disappointing in their outcomes. We can reduce the dissonance by justifying to ourselves that the effort was after all worthwhile. For example, students participating in an experiment were led to believe that it would be exciting and deal with sexual topics. Some had to go through a severe screening test, whereas the control group only listened to a few suggestive words about sexual behavior. What followed was a boring discussion on the sex life of invertebrates. The experimental group (who had to endure the screening to participate) experienced a large amount of dissonance between expectations and the actual event. What did the students do? Those in the dissonance group spent a great deal of time convincing themselves that the session was not so boring after all, that much useful information was imparted (Aronson & Mills, 1959). Useless bogus therapy brought about a similar dissonance reduction effort (Cooper, 1980).

Reevaluation pressures are especially strong when we choose between alternatives that seem more or less equally attractive (Brehm, 1956). The tendency to favor the chosen alternative increases when people are at the point of implementing the decision. This pattern indicates that the favorable reevaluation is a part of the decision making process (Harmon-Jones & Harmon-Jones, 2002). Some of the most dramatic reevaluations have occurred in cases where prophecy fails (Festinger, Riecken, & Schachter, 1956). A doomsday group had predicted the end of the world on a specific day. When the day arrived without the expected destruction, the group was initially chagrined. Soon, however, they responded to the dissonance with renewed energy as they busily engaged in recruiting new supporters. Did the attempt to convert others help reduce their own dissonance? Common sense would tell us that the group would just pack it in, and accept that their beliefs were absurd. Instead they performed as dissonance theory would predict and reduced dissonance by new explanations and active recruitment of new believers.

12.2 Counter attitudinal acts and dissonance

Many people have had the unpleasant experience of acting contrary to their attitudes. Perhaps the boss asked you to work on holy days when it would be against your beliefs or plans for the weekend to work. When a person engages in such attitude discrepant behavior, it is predictably followed by dissonance. Most people resolve these unpleasant feelings by readjusting the attitude. Perhaps it was not so bad to work on the proscribed days! After all I was paid to do it, and my standing with the company improved, they may reason. Similar rationalizations can be found for practically any behavior that runs contrary to a person’s original attitudes. Those who do not believe in premarital sex, but engage in the behavior, justify it by saying they are really in love, or it feels good so how could it be wrong? Any dissonance produced can be reduced by an overwhelming new array of beliefs that support the behavior.

If called upon to perform a counter attitudinal act, dissonance depends on the level of the incentive for the behavior. There has to be some justification or minimal incentive to engage in the behavior. The true believer who works on holy days because he wants the extra pay might feel dissonance. However, if the boss pays triple wages, gives alternative days off, and promotes the individual as a consequence, dissonance theory would predict little tension. We minimize dissonance when we have many good reasons for discrepant behavior. Dissonance was created in a study on whether communist speakers should be permitted at U.S. university campuses. Those who were paid little to participate in the study, changed their attitudes more compared to those paid more (Linder, Cooper, & Jones, 1967). For real attitude change there has to be some incentive, but not too much so the individual feels sufficiently compensated by the incentive.

Dissonance depends on whether we feel we have a choice. When we behave in ways contrary to our beliefs, but we feel we have little choice, the resulting behavior should cause little tension. If employment is necessary for survival, then working on days contrary to beliefs would probably be justified by most people. Along with feelings of choice, the commitment to the decision also matters. If we feel commitment to working on holy days despite our moral objection, and when we feel our behavior will not be altered, then less dissonance is experienced (Jonas, Schulz-Hardt, Dieter, & Thelen, 2001).

Some dissonant behaviors do not require much effort. Driving faster than the law allows may be contrary to a person's better sense, but it only requires a heavy foot and is not likely to produce much dissonance. However, if you are stopped by the police and have to pay a heavy fine, that is likely to produce dissonance. When people can foresee the possible negative consequences of the decisions, dissonance is increased. If you also had to work very hard, expend a great deal of effort to pay the fine, you are likely to experience even more dissonance. If a decision is felt as important, we feel more personal responsibility for the outcome. Therefore, if the outcome is negative, we feel more dissonance. We feel bound to reevaluate our attitudes when outcomes are negative, and we feel responsible (Scher & Cooper, 1989).

Other findings suggest that the dissonance increases when the behavior is relevant to our self-conception. If the behavior undermines our feelings of competence or morality, dissonance follows as attitudes change (Steele, 1988). This is especially true for people with high self-esteem as for these people a threat to competence will be felt as more dissonant requiring attitude change (Stone, 2003).

The conclusion is that dissonance and therefore attitude change results from a number of factors. These include limited incentives for the behavior (one cannot excuse it by the many rewards that come from performing it). We also have to feel we have some choice in the matter, and an unchanging commitment to the inconsistent behavior. We also experience more dissonance when we can foresee the consequences, and put great effort into the self-relevant behavior. Under these conditions, dissonance is likely to occur and attitude change follows.

12.3 Attitude change following compliance

When people are seduced or compelled to behave in ways that are inconsistent with their beliefs and values, dissonance follows. One could repent and give up the inconsistent behavior. However, the easier and therefore more likely path is to change or readjust attitudes. Festinger & Carlsmith (1959) demonstrated this effect when they asked the participants to engage in what can only be called experimental drudgery in a psychological experiment. Those who participated were sent directly for debriefing, and of course reported being bored by the experiment. In the experimental conditions the participants were told that the experiment was about how people's performance was influenced by their prior expectations. As part of the deception, these true experimental participants were informed that they were in the "control" condition, and they were asked to tell the next participants (confederates of the experimenter) about the experiment. Since the experimenter's confederate was absent would they (the true participants) tell the next subject how exciting the experiment was? Some of the participants were offered a dollar to participate in the study, other subjects were offered 20 dollars. This experiment was carried out in the days when a dollar would pay for the admission to a movie, but one dollar was not enough to make participants willing to lie, the experimenter reasoned. Being given $20 was, however, a significant amount, and therefore the individual would feel less dissonance in lying as he/she would feel some compensation and justification by telling the next person that the experiment was great. Later when asked about their experience, those in the one-dollar condition rated the experience more favorable than those in the $20 condition. Being seduced to lie for one dollar brought about more attitude change, whereas those in the control, and $20 conditions, rated the experiment negatively.

It follows that if we want to induce change we have to offer some incentive to arouse interest, but not so much that the person will feel justified in the compelled behavior. This has implications for childrearing as was shown in the experiment by Aronson & Carlsmith (1963). The experimenters showed nursery school children a set of five toys and asked how much they liked each. The children were then told that the experimenter had to leave the room, but they were free to play with all the toys except the second favored toy. In the mild threat condition, the child was told that the experimenter would be “annoyed”. In the severe threat instruction, that he would be “very angry”, and that all the toys would be taken away.

When the experimenter left the room, none of the children played with the forbidden toy. However, dissonance theory predicted that only the children in the mild threat condition would feel tension between their desire to play and their behavior. They therefore reasoned that these children would resolve the feelings of dissonance by downplaying the value of the toy. The children in the severe threat condition should feel little dissonance since the threat justified in the child’s mind why they should not play with the toy. As expected from dissonance theory, children in the severe threat condition continued to evaluate the toy favorably, they had not changed their minds. On the other hand, those in the mild condition changed their attitudes to less favorable or at least neutral. The compliance was enduring as even six weeks later the children from the mild threat condition were still derogating the toy (Freedman, 1965).Thus it would appear that mild threats is the way to go if a parent wants to encourage attitude change. Would that also work for adults?

12.4 Culture and dissonance

When working with the Aboriginals of Australia in a variety of capacities, many years ago, we observed that they were not particularly bothered about many things that bothered European descended people. If they showed up late for a meeting, that would not require an apology. Something just changed on the road to the circus, and we should understand that. Cognitively inconsistent thoughts may be a culturally bound effect, a result of societies that value consistency. Support for this idea has been found in several studies. In one study (Heine & Lehman, 1997) Japanese students displayed less dissonance when compared to Canadian participants.

Sakai (1981) in his study, however, found dissonance effects for his Japanese students if they were led to believe that other students were observing their behavior. We know from other studies that Asian people are more aware of others, and are more oriented toward the community and the reactions of other people. Hence if you can prime such awareness in Japanese participants, it should produce larger dissonance effects. This priming procedure produced dissonance effect in the study by Kitayama, Snibbe, Markus, and Suzuki (2004). For those cultures that are community oriented, dissonance effects may mainly have to do with social approval or disapproval whereas for western societies dissonance occurs more in connection with the ability to make good choices.

All cultures find some behaviors dissonant, but under very different circumstances. Those living in Asia express attitudes depending on the situation they find themselves in, because social harmony is an important value. Those in the west are also developing more tolerance for inconsistency, and often hold ambiguous attitudes. Some may favor the death penalty for certain reasons, but abhor it for other causes. Consistency may therefore be more in the nature of a culturally expressed value, rather than a cognitive way of organizing our world (Priester & Petty, 2001).

13. Self-perception theory

Suppose someone asked you “do you like to go to the movies?” You think for a moment and then say “well I go twice a week, so I must like movies!” This is an example of Bem’s (1972) self-perception theory. We do not really consciously know our attitudes; we look at our behavior and infer our attitudes from how we act and the situations in which our behavior occurs. Self-perception theory makes the same predictions as dissonance theory, but for very different reasons. For example in the experiment where the participant was paid a dollar or 20 dollars to tell someone that a very boring experiment was enjoyable, the individual in the one dollar situation is in dissonance when he lies. However, self-perception theory can also explain the results. The participant was paid only a dollar to lie, and that is not enough to justify a lie, therefore the participants think they must really have enjoyed the experiment. In other words, alternatively, the participants examined their behavior to determine their attitudes as self-perception theory predicted.

Self-perception theory is a social perception theory. People come to an understanding of their own attitudes and that of others by means of observation. Bem would argue that people often have no attitudes to report. People who live socially isolated lives, who are uninvolved in the happenings in society, and that is most of the people in the world, have no attitudes based on direct experiences. They observe when people stand up for the national anthem and infer patriotic attitudes. We see people say the pledge of allegiance in the US and we infer their attitudes toward the state. Those who say the pledge infer the same patriotic attitudes because saying is believing!

We watch other people act in a variety of circumstances, and infer from the behaviors their attitudes. We see people go to Church and infer religious attitudes, we read of people in the drugs scene and infer indifference to laws and social convention, we see people laugh and think they must be happy. Likewise we look at ourselves, because the behaviors we engage in are self-revealing, and tell us about our attitudes. We hear ourselves say something, and from that understand our attitudes. In one study, people who were anxious about an upcoming test were led to believe that the anxiety came from white noise delivered by their headphones. Those who were given this information were subsequently more calm and confident (Savitsky, Medvec, Charlton, & Gilovich, 1998).

James (1890) drew similar conclusions a century earlier when he said that we infer our emotions by how our bodies function. We take an examination important to our future and feel our heart pump, our hands get wet, and conclude from these physical symptoms our psychological state of anxiety. Often our emotions fall into line after our physical expressions. It is difficult to smile and still feel grumpy you could try it yourself. If you put a pen in your mouth holding it with your smiling muscles, will you not find the cartoons in the paper more funny? (see Strack, Martin, & Stepper, 1988). Now try for the opposite effect by holding the pen with pursed lips, how does that influence your feelings about the cartoons?

Other researchers have been able to elicit similar emotions from facial expressions (Laird, 1974, 1984; Duclos, Laird, Schneider, Sexter, Stern, & Van Lighten, 1989). From our observations of other's facial expressions we develop empathy, especially if we synchronize our movements, voice, and bodily postures with others (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1992). Feeling the same as others (empathy) may explain our attraction to happy people and our desire to avoid those who are depressed.

14. Evaluating the dissonance theory and the self-perception theory
People adopt attitudes or change for entirely different reasons in dissonance and self-perception theory. Festinger would say that attitudes are very enduring predispositions to act a certain way. When people behave in ways that are inconsistent, it produces unpleasant feelings that cause the individual to reevaluate his attitude. Bem, on the other hand, thinks of attitudes as somewhat causal in nature. We often do not know our likes or dislikes, but we infer these as we reflect on our behavior. We know that many people do not really have affect-

based attitudes, but possess stereotypes passed on by socialization. Consequently, when people have few experiences with the attitude object, or when people are not involved in the issue and it has little importance, the individual may infer their attitudes from how they behave (Albarracin & Wyer, 2000). This is as Bem would predict. However, when attitudes reflect more enduring issues that involve the person at a basic level, dissonance theory would better explain attitude change.

The process of attitude development and change is also different in the two theories. Dissonance theory hypothesizes that inconsistency between behavior and prior attitudes produces an unpleasant feeling in the individual, which is resolved by attitude change or adjustment. The unpleasant tension motivates change in our attitudes. Self-perception theory on the other hand would suggest that the process is rational, not emotional, as we examine our attitudes based on our behavior and the situation. Studies generally support the idea of arousal and therefore dissonance theory, when people act contrary to their true beliefs (Elkin & Leippe, 1986; Elliot & Devine, 1994; Harmon-Jones, 2000; Norton, Monin, Cooper, & Hogg, 2003).

How can we then reconcile the findings of the two theories? The studies on dissonance theory do indeed create emotional arousal as predicted. However, the dissonance results are also based on self report as explained by self-perception theory. Are both theories right? Today we see a consensus among social psychologists that dissonance theory applies when the inconsistent behavior is clear to the individual, and is important to him. Self-perception theory applies more to attitudes that for lack of experience are vague to the individual, and of little importance. Human behavior is complex, but sometimes people are simple, and have few experiences upon which to base their attitudes. Under these conditions they naturally look to others and their own behavior for explanations. Research has shown that a surprising number of people have weak or ambiguous attitudes suggesting the importance of self-perception theory. Furthermore, self-perception theory has shown that important social attitudes can be changed through self-awareness including the desire to contribute to the common welfare (Freedman & Fraser, 1966), and an awareness of how strong we feel about topics (Tice, 1993). Therefore, self-perception theory deals with more than the trivial, and engages also important topics. How do we change behaviors like smoking? It may prove more complex than just creating dissonant feelings. Self-perception theory would recommend self-awareness. At other times dissonance theory is important. Poignant experiences have left the individual with enduring predispositions to act. Those who experience war first hand develop very enduring attitudes toward violence as a means of solving conflict. We can conclude that dissonance and self-perception theories are both needed to explain attitudes.

It is important to remember that self-deception always plays a role in perception. You may think that only others behave in irrational ways, while that is not true of your own thinking. It is therefore likely that you believe that dissonance rationalizations are just something that others do since your attitudes are rational (Pronin, Gilovich, & Ross, 2004). However, we all rationalize to some degree about important social issues like war or global warming. We need to counteract both dissonance, and in the process also become more self-aware.

15. Self-presentation theory

One basic fact of human existence is our interrelationships with others. As a consequence of this interdependence, we care what other people think, and we work hard on developing an acceptable social identity. Self-presentation theory asserts that making a good impression is the primary basis for attitude development. We are motivated by our desire for acceptance by our peers and reference groups. By displaying consistent attitudes we seek to become more secure in acceptable social identities (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). In the pursuit of social acceptability we will say what it takes to win others over to our side, often with hypocrisy and insincerity.

Self-presentation theory suggests that many of our behaviors are shallow, and are often expressed as a means of managing the impression we make. It follows that our attitude expressions are motivated by a desire to avoid offense. We do not like to be the bearers of bad news, since that too may form a bad impression (Bond & Anderson, 1987).

According to self-presentation theory we never truly know others, because people are chameleons who change their attitudes to fit the environment. Likewise people change their attitude-based behaviors to fit the expectations of others. In this theory, attitude formation and change come about. We are social antennas attuned to acceptable attitudes, and our role is one of articulating these as we change our social environment. Some attitudes may be appropriate at home, others at the job, still others in cultural or political institutions. Attitudes therefore serve primarily an adjustment function helping us adjust to the demand of the social environment. In the process we often express attitudes in which we do not believe (Snyder, 1987; Zana & Olson, 1982; Snyder & DeBono, 1989; Snyder & Copeland, 1989).

As we have noted elsewhere, the desire for approval is also a personality trait, and people vary in how important it is to make desired impressions (Larsen, Martin, Ettinger, & Nelson, 1976). Those who care less what others may think are more internally motivated, and are therefore more likely to express sincere attitudes that they truly feel and believe (McCann & Hancock, 1983). People low in need for approval spend less time self-monitoring or worrying about what others think as they do what they think is right. Are most people anxious to fit into society, or do they express sincere self-relevant attitudes? How about you, do you use impression management so you can get good grades or make a good impression with parents and significant others?

Part of a good social image, at least in western societies is to "appear" consistent. Consistency reflects for many a person's integrity. In expressing our attitudes, we try to have people see us at our ideal self. However, this too may be based on our desire to be acceptable to those that matter in our lives. In self-perception theory, we are consistent in our behavior, not because we feel dissonance, but because consistency is a cultural value.

16. Expectancy-value theory
We have already discussed the functional value of attitudes. The Self-presentation theory promotes the idea that attitudes are held because they help us in social adjustment. Social-expectancy theory reflects more the direct benefits of attitudes in bringing us rewards, and helping us to avoid punishment. It is a theory that logically follows from the capitalist system where the profit motive predominates. Attitudes are formed as a result of a rational process where the individual examines all the cost and benefits associated with a given attitude position. Which attitude alternative brings the highest rewards (Edwards, 1954).

In more formal terms, Edwards suggested that people seek to maximize outcomes in society by assessing the value of the particular outcome, and the likelihood that the attitudes will produce the outcome. You are very anxious to achieve a job promotion, the increase in income is highly valued. Do you believe that expressing agreement with your boss on particular issues will make it more likely that he will support your promotion? Then expectancy theory suggests you adopt his attitudes with that expectancy in mind. On the other hand, maybe you will lose the esteem of your fellow workers if you brown nose the boss. We humans look at the balance of incentives where goals may be in conflict and adopt the course that is likely to maximize gains. Expectancy theory describes people as rational and calculating decision makers. We can see many examples from history where people manipulate others in order to obtain high office and personal gain.

Summary

Attitude theory is a central topic in social psychology, and a field that is studied from the beginning of the history of our discipline. The structure or components are defined in this chapter. Each attitude has an affective, a belief, and a behavioral component. Attitudes are oriented toward specific objects that can be other people, ideas, or things. We expect a consistency between the components. Generally an attitude is manifested by some positive or negative feeling toward the object, a supporting set of beliefs, and expressed by certain behaviors. The chapter also discussed when that does not occur, when attitude-behavior inconsistence is apparent.

There are those who think, based on identical twin studies, that attitudes have a genetic basis. However, most of our research has researched a social basis for attitude formation. One or another component may dominate in attitude development. For some people attitudes are based on what they know. Affect, however, plays the dominant role for many attitudes also affecting important cognitive issues such as which candidate to support in elections. Some attitudes express a person's underlying value system, and are based on reason and memory. Other attitudes are formed from direct experience. People can also develop attitudes toward a variety of objects without any personal experience as we see in prejudicial behavior.

Theories of attitude formation rest on the classical viewpoints of learning theory including conditioning, reinforcement, and social learning. Functional theory has made major contributions by suggesting that attitudes are formed in response to the basic needs of the individual. Functional theory responds to the why of attitude development, but also suggests the how of attitude change. We must appeal to the functions if we hope to change these in a more desirable direction. Research is described for the several functions. In the utilitarian function, attitudes serve to maximize rewards and minimize punishment. The ego defensive function suggests that many attitudes are developed in order to maintain a positive self-image and control our anxieties. The research on terror management shows that this function may have very broad implications, not only for philosophy, but also for creativity as we search for some permanence in our temporary existence. Attitudes may also give expression to our underlying values that we have obtained in the socialization process from parents and reference groups. For example, children often manifest similar political and religious attitudes to that of their parents. Attitude functions are based on selective memory and perception in organizing our world. We tend to value information supporting our viewpoints more highly, and it is also more assessable in memory.

We cannot evaluate the literature unless we understand something about how attitudes are measured. The various attitude scales have been developed to address several measurement problems. These include issues of unidimensionality asking does the scale measure a single dimension. Other measurement issues include the reliability or consistency of the results over time or within the scale. Validity asks the question: does the scale measure what it purports to measure? Researchers have developed several techniques to address these issues. Reproducibility refers to whether we can reproduce a person's individual responses on a scale given that we know his total score. It is just another way of saying do the statements fall along a single dimension. Both Guttman and Mokken have developed methods to assess this issue.

Bogardus initiated the study of attitudes by means of his social distance scale. It gave the researchers a rough estimate of stereotypes toward various social groups. This was followed by Thurstone's method of equal appearing intervals, which supplied information about the content of attitudes, and responded also to measurement problems of reliability and validity. Likert developed a method with equivalent utility, but much easier to construct. Guttman and Mokken addressed the issue of reproducibility and unidimensionality.

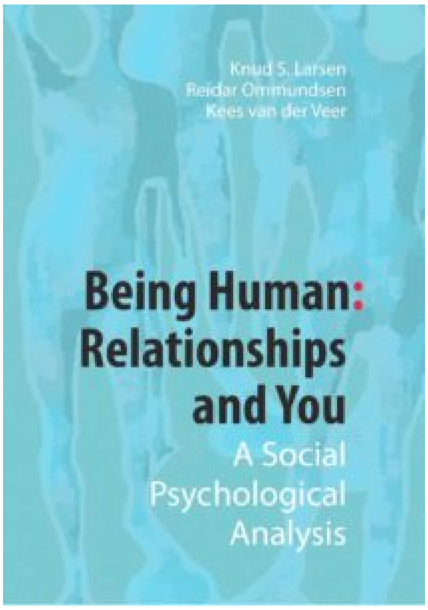
Contemporary research shows activity on a variety of attitude objects from attributed power to illegal immigration. These topics can also be addressed by single item surveys, but the advantage of scales is the assessments of reliability and validity. Also the results of survey depend greatly on the exact wording. Even apparently minor changes in words used can produce dramatic differences in responses. It is important to remember that we are discussing explicit attitudes in this chapter. We can only measure that which is assessable to the mind, but people may have opposing implicit attitudes of which they have little awareness.

Are attitudes useful predictors of behavior? The LaPiere study caused consternation as social psychologists observed an apparent inconsistency between initial behavior and subsequent attitudes. We should remember that LaPiere probably did not study attitudes, but rather stereotypic responses derived from a prejudicial society. Other causes for attitude-behavior inconsistency are the many different factors that compete for attention. The social desirability of attitudes causes some people to refrain from expressing these in order not to offend those with influence. To evaluate research, we need to have the long view in examining attitude change, and ensure a good fit between measurement and behavior. It does not matter much to predictability whether the attitude measured is specific and narrow, or general and broad. What is required is that measurement and behavior must be at the same level of specificity. Broad attitudes are important in understanding the framework for more specific attitudes and the supporting norms. Other sources of attitude-behavior inconsistency derives from having no direct experience with the attitude object, no accessibility which allows for spontaneous expression, and the presence of automatic attitudes which require little thought and therefore produce no dissonance. Theories suggest prediction is improved if we know a person's attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

At times we can observe that attitude development follows expressed behavior. From studies on counter attitudinal acts, results show that dissonance depends on the level of incentives, our feelings of choice, the effort required, and if the attitude is self relevant. Attitudes also follow compliance in several studies.

The self-perception theory of Bem states that we look to our behavior to determine our attitudes. Dissonance and self-perception theories predict similar behaviors, but for very different reasons. Dissonance theory is more useful in understanding attitudes that the individual considers important and self-relevant whereas for self-perception theory the primary purpose of attitudes is to make a good impression and attitudes therefore serve primarily adjustment functions. In self-presentation theory, attitudes are an expression of our desire for social acceptance. The chapter concludes with a discussion of expectancy-value theory that states that attitudes are developed or changed by the desire to obtain rewards and avoid punishment.

Being Human. Chapter 6: The Influences Of Group Membership



Social psychology is about the influence of others on our behavior. There are many influences on our behavior as represented by the varying chapters of this book, but group membership is central to social psychology. What is a group? A group consists of two people or more who interact directly. People in groups are to some degree interdependent because their needs and goals in life cause them to have influence on one another (Cartwright & Zander, 1968; Lewin, 1948). Groups are so central to our lives that we rarely give a thought as to why we join. Clearly groups have many benefits, some related to our very survival, which helps define why we join. Some researchers would even say group memberships reflect innate needs tied to survival and derived from our evolutionary past (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Life with others allows for many benefits that include (in our early history) protection from predators of either the animal or human variety. Other benefits may include assistance in child rearing, or hunting and gathering, or in collaborative agriculture that eventually freed human society from ever present hunger. In fact in all cultures people are motivated to seek memberships in a variety of groups, and often to maintain their affiliation at all costs There may be even an innate need for social contact people isolated long enough will as a consequence often display symptoms of mental disease or otherwise "lose" their minds (Gardner, Pickett & Brewer, 2000).

1. What are groups?

Researchers have observed that group structure is created almost immediately after a group is formed. For example Merei (1949) noted that after only a few meetings children began to differentiate roles and establish informal rules as to who would sit where in the room and who would play with certain toys. This differentiation of expected behavior is referred to as group structure (Levine &

Moreland, 1998). Social norms are the behaviors and rules that are considered standard and appropriate for the group. In one study young teenage girls decided what boys were considered eligible, and one accepted rule among the girls was to not pursue boys who were already attached to someone else (Simon, Eder, & Evans, 1992).

Groups also define the roles of group members; i.e., the division of labor specifying required behavior by each member. Role specification would define the responsibilities of the head of an organization, and the expected behaviors required by other members of the group? Also, the group determines the status of each member. What prestige does the individual have within the group, and therefore what potential or actual leadership position or authority is vested in each member. Even in groups where there is some formal equality, research indicates that some individuals emerge as more powerful than others. In the jury system, even though initially there is no difference in the selection of members, when deliberation begins some members quickly become more influential and one is voted to become the jury foreman or leader. Generally groups are formed to achieve certain goals, and those who are perceived to be effective toward that end are given high status. This is also called expectation theory (Berger, Webster, Ridgeway, & Rosenholtz, 1986).

A community wide organization is not a group. For example being a member of a university is not a group since one does not interact with all members of the student body. Being a member of the military or a church does not suggest group membership since again they offer no opportunity for all members to interact. Likewise being on an airplane with other passengers does not form a group since again people have few opportunities to interact. That of course could change if the plane underwent some emergency requiring passengers to interact to save their lives. Generally groups consist of two or three members to several dozen participants. To be a group the situation must allow for mutual interaction and interdependence.

Groups emerged out of our evolutionary past since they performed many important functions for the individual and society. Groups assist us in forming our identity, who are we and what are our values. This is easy to see among students who often wear clothes, e.g., t-shirts with some slogan identifying group membership such as being fans of musical groups, although a fan group like a group of university students as such is not to be considered a “group” automatically because interaction might not define large numbers of students.

So all groups have in common that the members interact and therefore influence one another. Groups also serve as a form of identification between those who are like-minded and those who are not. Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherrell (1987) would say that groups encourage the feeling of “us” versus “them” or those who think differently. People do not join groups to be challenged in their beliefs, or for alternative viewpoints. Generally people join groups to be reinforced in their already existing viewpoints (Levine & Moreland, 1998; George, 1990). Another feature of groups is the role they play in reinforcing social or group norms. These powerful determinants of our behavior shape our behavior, and groups encourage conformity. If we do not follow the group norms we may be shunned or asked to leave (Marques, Abrams, & Serodio, 2001).

1.1 Groups define our roles

A very important function of groups is specifying the roles played by members. The manager and worker play distinctly different roles in a work group. Roles specify how individuals occupying certain positions should behave. Role specification, depending on the values of the group, may be a positive factor leading to higher productivity or satisfaction, or alternatively role rigidity may lead to autocratic behavior leading to stagnation. Roles can be very helpful since they let people know what to expect from each other, thus making behavior more predictable and efficient in many cases. When the group operates with clearly defined roles, performance and satisfaction increases (Bettencourt & Sheldon, 2001).

At times social roles may be counterproductive and lead to anti-social behavior. We see through the experiences of war how some people get lost in their group identity, and under the cover of that identity commit brutal acts (Fiske, Harris & Cuddy, 2004). Zimbardo and his co-workers brought to our attention (Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973) how easy it is to have the role take over the identity of the individual. In their experiment students were assigned as either prisoners or guards in a simulated mock prison. The experiment had been designed to last for two weeks, but was stopped after 6 days, because the participants were clearly changing in a negative way as a result of their role-playing. The “guards” became brutal in their treatment, devising ways of humiliating their fellow students. Those playing the role of “prisoners” also changed and became more submissive and compliant in the face of the abuse. Clearly, roles can have even stronger effects in the real word, as in the case of real prisons. We need only to look at the abuse in Iraq to see a disgusting example of behavior changed when "normal" citizens in the armed services play the role of guards, and when the norms of the US armed forces allow such abuse. The example of prisoner abuse in the US prison camp in Cuba, Guantanamo Bay, also comes to mind. The effect of roles on aggressiveness may also be exacerbated when people with aggressive personality dispositions feel attracted to roles as guards (Carnahan & McFarland, 2007).

1.2 Gender roles

Currently societies all over the world are experiencing many changes pertaining to sex roles. In the past women in a variety of cultures were expected to take on the role of wife and mother, and to be primarily responsible for the home. With emerging modern societies this gender role specification has largely changed. In socialist societies the change came about for ideological reasons favoring the equality of the sexes, and the needed productivity from women's intellectual and cultural contributions. In the case of capitalist societies the change came about as a consequence of long struggles by feminists and their supporters for equal opportunity and treatment. The First World War, 1914-1918, contributed to gender role changes. When the men went to fight during World War I the women started working at many of the men's jobs in factories and other locations. When the war ended, women did not accept the re-establishment of the traditional roles. In the 1920's women were granted voting rights in many European countries and in the US. The feminist movements of the 1960s, and onward also greatly changed the nature of gender roles.

The changes in role expectations of women caused, as might be expected, much conflict. Some of the conflict came as a result of women taking on increased burdens. In addition to now working outside jobs, she was also expected to maintain the traditional role of primary childcare provider, and provide for the general maintenance of the home. Some evidence would suggest that this expectation is still present in our modern world (Brislin, 1993).

One interesting aspect of role changes is that they also changed women's attitudes and personality traits. When women's status improved in society so did their assertiveness (Twenge, 2001). In other words gender roles are powerful determinants of our personalities, and how we generally feel about ourselves and our lives (Eagly, & Steffen, 2000).

1.3 Group cohesiveness

Groups vary. Some are very temporary where membership has only fleeting importance. Student groups are of this type since membership ceases upon graduation. But in other cases the ties between group members may be very tenacious and enduring, in some cases for life. Of course the family comes to mind. But having common goals as found in political groups or those based on common religious beliefs may also create harmonious groups with great endurance. In these groups there are many qualities which bind the members to each other, and which serve to produce mutual liking and respect. The term group cohesiveness is generally used to describe such close-knit groups that have an enduring character and promote mutual liking and respect.

One could say ideally all social groups would have such a character. Unfortunately other factors also play a role. For example in university departments, collegial groups that would benefit greatly from cohesiveness often do not because of professional jealousy or competitiveness. Environments that reward excelling at the expense of others produce conflict. Generally speaking, cohesiveness produces a better group atmosphere, and makes it more likely that members stay together and combine in their efforts to produce better group products, and seek to have new members join (Levine & Moreland, 1998).
While many factors may effect the cohesiveness of a group the liking relationship is probably most important. When people have strong feelings of friendship for one another, cohesiveness is high (Paxton & Moody, 2003). Liking improves the effectiveness of group performance as such groups will manifest less dysfunctional conflict, and interact more harmoniously. Groups, in some very significant ways, determine who we are, and our sense of identification with the group is important in feelings of group cohesiveness. Political and religious groups all help the individual connect with the larger world, and express deeply held attitudes and values (Van Vugt & Hart, 2004).

Some groups are important because they serve these or other instrumental needs. Satisfaction is not always guaranteed. Although in many cases our attraction to the group is based on anticipated positive consequences, at times a group stays cohesive because there are no alternatives apparent. People may stay in a job they despise because the salary is high, or there are no good alternatives. Many students stay in courses they have little enthusiasm for because these courses are required for graduation. However, when group members enjoy the company of each other and accept the goals of the group, satisfaction and morale tend to be high. Such cohesive groups are more likely to enhance productivity if the norms of the group include hard work and dedication (McGrath, 1984).

2. Social influences

Hence we shall discuss three primary examples of group influences: social facilitation, social loafing, and deindividuation.

2.1 Social facilitation

The initial question addressed by social psychologists was, do people act differently when other people are around than they do when alone? Does the presence of others produce more energy in pursuing our tasks, or is it more likely we become lazy in the presence of others. These and many other questions have been addressed in early as well as very recent research. Triplet (1898) completed the first study on social facilitation. He conducted what is generally regarded as the first experiment in social psychology. He invited a group of children to his laboratory and asked them to cast and reel in fishing lines as fast as possible over six trials with rest periods between. In three of the trials the child performed by himself, in the other three there was another child present doing the same task. The children tended to reel in faster when they were in the presence of another child, a phenomena that Triplet called social facilitation. Later experiments confirmed these findings (Gates, 1924), and extended the social facilitation findings to animal species (Ross & Ross, 1949), however, this early research also included some contradictions. On more complex tasks the presence of others produced inhibition of performance, as for example in solving arithmetic problems (Dashiell, 1930). These different results suggested two possibilities. Sometimes the presence of others helps, and in other cases it hurts performance.

2.1.1 Social facilitation on simple and complex tasks

Karl Marx said in Das Kapital " Mere social contact begets…a stimulation of the animal spirit that heightens the efficiency of each workman". In other words he anticipated that social facilitation would serve as releaser of energy. The presence of others energizes people to perform at higher levels if the task is simple. Zajonc and his co-workers (Zajonc, Heingartner, & Herman, 1969) presented a theory that explained in an elegant manner when the presence of others helped facilitate performance. People do better on simple tasks in the presence of others, but do worse on complex tasks (Schmitt, Gilovich, Goore, & Joseph, 1986; Bond & Titus, 1983). Doing something simple like riding a bicycle leads to performance at higher levels when others including spectators are present. We see this heightened performance in the achievements during the Olympics when world records are set in front of millions of fans present or watching on television.

However, if one is working on a difficult math problem, then the presence of others may be diverting and flustering as a solution is sought. The reason for the lower level of functioning is the psychological fact that we cannot easily attend to two things at the same time and the presence of others may divert our attention.

In addition people, as social animals, are always concerned about how people evaluate them. People are worried about doing poorly in the presence of others, and this evaluation apprehension causes us to do poorly on complex tasks. Evaluation apprehension has been verified in numerous studies (Geen, 1989; Thomas, Skitka, Christen, & Jurgena, 2002). One important question raised is: is it the mere presence of others that causes evaluation apprehension? The answer to that assertion is no. It is the possibility of being evaluated that causes the apprehension (Cottrell, Wack, Sekerak & Rittle, 1968). Cottrell et al show conclusively that it is our concern that others may evaluate us, and not just their presence, that produces the social facilitation affect.

So in summary, the presence of others may energize us on simple tasks if our individual efforts can be evaluated which produces alertness, but produces evaluation apprehension with complex tasks. Depending on the complexity of the task, distraction and attention conflict may hurt performance. From the perspective of Zajonc et. al. (1969) we respond to the presence of others with the most dominant response. In simple tasks the dominant response happens to be the correct response, but on complex tasks the dominant response of the individual is most frequently an incorrect response. On complex tasks what we have learned in the past is not a guide for a solution that presents novel challenges. Habituated responses do not solve the problems of science or society.

2.1.2 The effect of crowding

In the presence of others people are aroused manifested by physiological changes. People breathe faster, have a faster heart rate, perspire more, and have higher levels of blood pressure from the mere presence of others (Geen & Gange, 1983; Moore &Baron, 1983). In crowds the presence of others may intensify the already prevalent mood. People who are mourning feel grief more intensely at a eulogy and those who are excited at sporting events express more freely their fanatic expressions. Negative behaviors such as lynching are also more likely when a crowd is organized and prepped for hostile actions. In crowds friendly people are seen as more friendly, and unfriendly people are disliked even more. Again task completion may be affected. Crowding has negative affects on complex tasks, but does not negatively affect simple or routine behaviors (Evans, 1979). Crowding is the subjective feeling of not having enough space. This experience is different from objective measures of population density, i.e., how many people occupy a given space. Crowding is the physical discomfort felt from being cramped, and desiring more space especially when with strangers. If one is with a loved one on the other hand, he/she may desire very little space as most of us are in fact happier with less space. However, in a location at the beach or in the mountains among the public even a few people can provide a feeling of crowdedness. Crowding is always experienced as unpleasant.

The individual experiences sensory overload when being crowded (Milgram, 1970; Baum & Paulus, 1987). In addition people in crowds feel less in control (Baron & Rodin, 1978). For example crowding produces less control in moving about, in maintaining privacy, or otherwise managing the environment. We attribute negative meaning to being crowded. On the other hand at a sporting event people are distracted by the action and do not feel the unpleasant consequences of high density. High density on a bus or train is less distracting, and people may feel stress.

Culture has a significant effect on whether a person feels crowded (Evans, Lepore, & Allen, 2000). People from more collectivist cultures prefer closer physical distances in conversation, and are less affected by high physical density as compared to those living in more individualistic cultures such as those in Western Europe or the United states.

2.2 Social loafing: Another consequence from the presence of others

At times the presence of others may not produce increased energy or task completion. This phenomenon is called social loafing. We have all met people who seek a free ride in life, and who do as little as possible to survive. When we become members of groups it often allows us anonymity, where the individual identity is merged into that of the group. The individual in the presence of others becomes less noticeable, and therefore less worried about evaluation. Social loafing occurs when the individual believes that individual performance will not be noticed, but rather the overall group product is evaluated. In a factory, for example workers may earn salary based on overall productivity rather than individual performance. In collectivist farming, the individual farmer has less responsibility, but is judged as part of collective performance. Social loafing is therefore the tendency of people to perform worse on simple tasks in the presence of others, because of anonymity of individual contribution (Williams, Harkins, & Karau, 2003).

Performance in groups is affected by how important the individual perceives his contribution is to the outcome and how much the individual values the goal. If the individual's effort is getting lost in the crowd and cannot be identified that situation is likely to produce lower levels of performance. Social loafing refers to the relaxation in effort when the individual cannot be held responsible for his/her production, and his/her work cannot be identified.
Consequently the solution to social loafing is straightforward. Make sure that each individual's performance can be identified, and therefore evaluated. Social loafing is moreover greatest among strangers, but seems to disappear when the individual works with people he knows well, or works in a group that is highly valued by the company or by society. Social loafing is reduced when offering appreciation in the form of higher salaries or other social rewards (Shepperd & Wright, 1989). Also it is less likely to occur when the tasks required are complex, interesting, meaningful and identifiable. Among highly motivated workers there is also sometimes the tendency to compensate for the inadequate performance of others (Williams & Karau, 1991). This is known as social compensation and occurs when the individual believes that others do not work adequately, and the outcome or product is important.

Sometimes an individual lacks information about the productivity of others. If he is highly motivated how does he handle this situation? Plaks & Higgins (2000) found that people rely on social stereotypes to assess productivity. Based on the stereotype that females do not perform as well as males on mathematics, the researchers found that males worked harder when paired with a female. When a colleague is unwilling or unable to produce at high levels, motivated workers seek to compensate and work harder.

2.2.1 Cross cultural differences in social loafing
Some studies have found evidence for social loafing in a variety of societies like Thailand, India and China (Karau & Williams, 1993). However, there is also evidence for cultural differences where social loafing is greater in individualistic cultures and occurs less in more collectivist societies (Gabrenya, Wang, & Latane,

1985).

On collective farms the Russian peasant was given small plots of land to produce for his own use and for sale. These plots constituted less than 1 percent of the total agricultural land, but produced 27 percent of the output in the nation. Similar results were found for Hungary where private plots accounted for 13 percent of the land, but approximately one third of the total production (Spivak, 1979). In China when farmers were allowed to sell food grown in excess of state requirements, food production increased by 8 percent each year after 1978 (Church, 1986). Are these improvements related to social facilitation or social loafing? When the individual feels he has no personal investment, and efforts are not individually appreciated, production is likely to decrease. However workers who grow up in a group-oriented society, where the individual is taught the importance of the welfare of the group, and may perform better working in groups.

The challenge in collective societies is not to give up the goal of a common and harmonious future, but to provide the individual with feelings of ownership of social production, and develop techniques of rewarding individual performance. This reward system must obviously go beyond the “heroes of labor” awards in the Soviet Union that likely were instituted in response to social loafing. Real feelings of ownership of social property and management must be encouraged. That is a high challenge, but critical to the future of societies that follow the socialist path.

Capitalist societies encourage individual goals and achievements that results in higher productivity levels. This makes it less likely that the individual worker identifies with group goals. As in all research any principles evolved on social loafing must be verified in cross-cultural research, particularly research that has significant effects for social policy. In some ways the ideals of a collectivist society must become internalized and accepted in a genuine manner, and not be based on threats. If the goal is compelling to the individual, then the team effort will increase. We are not speaking of empty promises of the distant future, but real gains for society that can be observed and measured. People loaf less when they are challenged, when the work is motivating or appealing (Brickner, Harkins & Ostrom, 1986). When people see their own individual efforts as indispensable, work productivity increases (Kerr, 1983). Therefore it is not the ideology of a society, whether individualistic or collectivist, that matters. What matters are the perceived individual incentives provided that gives the worker a stake in the future development of society. This is vividly demonstrated by the Kibbutz system in Israel. This collective socialist farming system actually out produced Israel's private farms (Williams, 1981; Leon, 1969). Clearly the collective farmers in this socialist system felt that their individual efforts mattered and felt an ownership of management and social property.

2.2.2 Gender differences in social loafing

Women tend to be higher in what is called relation interdependence, i.e., they care more about personal relationships, tend to be more aware of these, and focus their attention on others. Do these traits have an effect on social loafing? As it turns out Karau & Williams (1993) found evidence for less social loafing in women as compared to men. Other evidence for less loafing in women is also found in other studies (Eagly, 1987; Wood, 1987). Women do of course engage in social loafing just like men, but they do so to lower levels. Likewise men in Asian cultures also loaf, just to a lower degree than men in western cultures.

In summary we need to know several conditions to determine whether the presence of others facilitates or hinders performance. First is the individual's efforts evaluated so there are personal consequences for the quality and quantity of performance? If the performance is evaluated, then the presence of others leads to higher levels of arousal and energy. But if performance cannot be evaluated, when the individual is just a number and anonymous in a large group, then social loafing is likely. Secondly, the complexity of the task makes a difference. Social facilitation research shows that people in general do better when confronted with a simple task when among others, but worse when performing on complex or difficult objectives.

2.2.3 General applications to work situations

For the management of workers doing simple tasks there should be ways to reward individual performance, or at least create individual evaluations of performance. In such circumstances evaluation anxiety produces better productivity. Social loafing also has implications for the physical arrangements of the work situation. On simple tasks workers perform better when directly observed by the supervisor since social loafing produces lower performance on simple tasks. On the other hand if the worker is required to perform complex tasks it is important to lower performance anxiety and place workers in situations where they are not observed in order to reduce anxiety and produce better solutions. In today's offices workers performing complex tasks are often placed in open office locales. This is done to create openness and make everyone feel even the highest officers are assessable. Is that always the best working situation for those working on complex tasks? The research cited above would suggest that the physical arrangements of work situations should be tailored to the task performed, simple or complex. When the solution requires complex or novel responses and must be committed to memory it is best done without the arousal or distraction of others. Studying with fellow students can help maintain energy and motivation. However, preparing for a test that requires individual thinking and complex solutions is best done when working in some form of social isolation. Likewise in the work situation social facilitation would produce benefits for simple repetitive tasks, but as the difficulty level rises workers need the luxury of privacy.

2.3 Deindividuation

You probably recognize the fact that people do things in groups they would never do alone. For example, sometimes groups are transformed into vicious mobs bent on destruction and aggression. The football hooligans in Europe come to mind. In more serious cases we can see this effect also in the dismal history of lynching mobs in the United States who murdered thousands of slaves and free blacks during this dark time of history. Le Bon (1895) believed that groups became mobs through a process of social contagion where people lost their higher faculties of reason and moderation. In large mobs it is as if people descend to lowers levels of civilization where individual rational minds give way to an irrational “group mind”. Something different happens when we become part of a group. The group is both more and also different from a collection of individual minds. Deindividuation refers to the loss of individual identity and self-regulation, and the lower influence of moral values that occur in group settings (Diener, 1980; Festinger, Pepitone, & Newcomb, 1952). As individuals we have an interest in our appearance and how our behavior may be evaluated whereas in crowds people often become barbarians.

Zimbardo (1970) suggested that people in a deindividuated state are less able to observe themselves, are less concerned with social evaluations, less aware of the self, and more focused on others. Being in such a state may lower the threshold for behaviors which otherwise would be inhibited in the individual. Deindividuated people may participate in impulsive behaviors including murder of innocents or the sacking of public property. Zimbardo argues that people in many societies live in mental straitjackets where they always have to keep their impulses under control. Mob behavior may be liberating and allow for feelings of spontaneity. If we review cross-cultural societies we can see that nearly all national and cultural groups have events that allow some escape from the cognitive control. For example in Latin America during carnival people let go of their inhibitions. Other nations may have festivals of a similar kind. Sporting events also allow a similar release from our self-censorship. Society has an interest in allowing for venues that permit release from self-control whether through dancing or other cultural events. Such events permit the release of pent up feelings and frustrations.

A decidedly negative form of deindividuation is what is called suicide baiting. For some of us it is difficult to understand how anyone would encourage a suicidal person to jump from a tall building. Yet that is what frequently happens in the anonymity of large crowds gathered to view what for some is spectacle. Mann (1981) examined 15 years of newspaper accounts of suicidal jumps and found that nearly 50 percent included suicide baiting, where the suicidal person was encouraged to jump by some anonymous person in the crowd. Usually the baiting was associated with large crowds and darkness making individual identification less likely.

War is of course the ultimate form of antisocial behavior. The long and dark history of mankind is manifested by our determined efforts to kill one another in aggression and hostility. It is easier to kill in warfare because these conditions produce deindividuation. Soldiers feel excused from the usual prohibitions against barbarity when they cannot be held individually accountable, and when society places value on aggressive behavior. Watson (1973) investigated warfare in 23 non-western cultures to examine the effect of deindividuation on brutality. If the warriors were deindividuated before battle by wearing masks or painting their faces the likely outcome was more brutality found in the torture of enemies and the fight to death. It is instructive that in modern armies uniforms serve a similar function supported by attempts to stereotype and dehumanize the enemy before battle.

Deindividuation refers to the loosening of the normal restrictions we all feel when aware of personal values and societal constraints. When people are deindividuated they find it easier to perform both impulsive and deviant acts (Lea, Spears, & De Groot, 2001). In war we see many horrible acts committed by so-called “normal” people who would probably consider themselves upright moral persons. The massacre at My Lai comes to mind as just one of thousands of brutal acts committed during the war. It is truly a question of getting lost in the crowd thus displacing responsibility for violent acts to the situation or authorities and thereby escaping personal guilt. Getting lost in the crowd is a useful metaphor.

Mullen (1986) found support for the idea that the larger the mob the more savage the behavior. In a content analysis of newspaper accounts of lynching in the United States he found that the larger the mob the more savage the people were in murdering their victims. The larger the number of people the less the individual responsibility felt by the participant.
Deindividuation also works through increasing conformist behavior found in obedience to the norms of the group (Postmes & Spears, 1998). If the norms of the group include the right to take life if the person is of another race or nationality, then being lost in the crowd is likely to produce obedience to this dominant norm. Other contrary norms may be present of a personal nature. The apparent moral conflict between personal and group norms are not felt by many people as the power of the group norm overcomes in most cases individual consciousness. It is the norm of the group that determines at that particular moment the behavior of the mob, whether positive or negative. For some groups the norms are vicious, in others they are more benign. Behavior obviously differs whether one is a member of a lynch mob or intends to get lost in a crowd at a rock concert.

In other words, deindividuation is enhanced if the group is large allowing for psychological and physical anonymity. This explains why uniforms are often part of the deindividuation process as we see historically in the fondness of the Nazi’s for their uniforms and for uniformity. Why did the Ku Klux Klan wear sheets and hoods when performing their acts of terror against Black or progressive people in the United States? Why did the executioners in medieval times wear black and often were masked? Even today executions are deindividuated since the executioner is anonymous. Further, the act of killing is carried out by several participants diffusing responsibility. Anonymity is preserved and no individual needs to feel responsible.

Deindividuation occurs in the presence of distracting activities. If we yell at the referees at sporting events we do so because the norms permit us to do it, and we are anonymous. Later we may think more of what was said and feel chagrined at our uncouth behavior. In some cases we directly seek to be deindividuated to release ourselves from personal responsibility. Examples are dances and religious worship experiences where the individual gives up rational behavior in favor of closeness with others and overcoming aloneness.

2.3.1 Moving toward self-awareness

If loosing ourselves in the crowd makes us more impulsive, then perhaps a greater focus on the self could produce opposite effects. When we look inward, we focus on the self and on our values, and we become more concerned with self-evaluation. Research shows that under these conditions we become more concerned with whether our behavior conforms to our most deeply held values (Duval & Wicklund, 1972). Few people meet such high standards of self awareness, but there are always inspiring examples of some, like those who go on true humanitarian missions even knowing they may be killed or tortured by the very people they are trying to help. Experiments (Duval & Lalwani, 1999; Beaman, Klentz, Diener, & Svanum, 1979) have shown that people do indeed act more consistently with their innermost values if first made self-conscious by being placed in front of a mirror or an attending audience. For some people such self-consciousness is painful, as they become aware of the discrepancy between their values and behavior. Some conflicted individuals seek to escape self-consciousness through alcoholism or other forms of escapist behavior.

Many people are self-conscious to a painful degree as demonstrated in what we call the spotlight effect. The spotlight effect occur when we believe that we are scrutinized by others, judged by others, noticed and remembered by others, to a much larger degree than is truly the case. We believe others attend to us, while we ourselves do not attend to others (Epley, Savitsky & Gilovich, 2002; Gillivich, Kruger, & Medvec, 2002).

In conclusion, we have seen that the relationship between self-consciousness and behavior takes two paths. In the case of deindividuation, the individual loses self-awareness when in large crowds, producing less self-awareness and behavior in the direction of conformity to the immediate group norms. The resulting behaviors often are impulsive and destructive as we observe in mob behavior. The opposite, the second path, takes place when self-awareness and the spotlight affect produce motivation to behave with more propriety and in accordance with personal values and beliefs.

2.3.2 Group versus individual decisions

Are group decisions more superior to those of individuals? Groups influence behavior, sometimes for the better, sometimes with disastrous consequences depending on the norms of the group. Now let us address the issue of whether group decisions are better than the solitary decision. Intuitively we may think that the individual has only his own experience and knowledge of social reality so group decisions are better. A group would bring to the decision more experience, and an evaluative process that may, given the right circumstances, produce better decisions. What some research tells us is that more heads are better than one, if the group relies on those with the expertise (Davis & Harless, 1996). This, however, requires norms that encourage a focus on expertise and group goals rather than power or status seeking.

Group processes might however interfere with good decisions. Many group members exhibit streaks of stubbornness and an unwillingness to admit error, and therefore once committed to a goal are unwilling to change. Such ignorance of expertise is called process loss, i.e., when groups inhibit good decision making due to extraneous influences such as ego or dogma which are not relevant or useful to the decision being made (Steiner, 1972). Other forms of inhibition of the decision-making process occur as a consequence of communication problems, where people do not listen to each other, effectively tuning out important information. In yet other groups, some individuals are intellectual monopolizers who grab the limelight and dominate all the discussion. In some groups there is little trust and little communication. In these groups the important issues may never be discussed due to insecurity and fear of rejection.

2.3.3 When information is not shared

Sometimes there is insufficient information to provide a base for good decisions. It is a well established finding in social psychology that members in groups tend to focus on the information they have in common, and ignore information that each member may have separately and individually. Groups have a tendency to discuss only information that is shared by group members, and to exclude from the discussion information that is novel (Staser & Titus, 1985). Even if members of a group have useful, but novel information, chances are that this will not be discussed, or will be brought up so late in discussion that it has limited utility. In one study (Winquist & Larson, 1998), group discussions were coded for how much time was spent on each segment. The results showed the common knowledge effect; i.e., group members spend considerably more time discussing common information and little time on unshared information. This effect discounts the major advantage of group decisions that of making better decisions when carried out from a broader knowledge base.

The reasons that this effect occurs are relatively clear. When common information is discussed all have a shared framework that in turn produces greater ease and comfort in the group process. Everyone can participate when common information is discussed, whereas only a few when the information is novel. It is the rare group member that has sufficient ego strength to bring up novel topics and information. In general, group members who bring up commonly shared information are also valued more positively as compared to those who bring up information that is unique. A wise group would be aware of this fact, and wanting to make the best decisions would ensure that meetings are long enough so that novel ideas, typically brought up late in the discussion, may have a full hearing. The idea of comfort being a factor in the type of discussions also explains why groups show a confirmation bias. Groups seek out information that will confirm already existing viewpoints, rather than information that might challenge the status quo. Group discussions aim at justifying initial decisions rather than critically examining new information that might challenge previous decisions (Schulz-Hardt, Frey, Luthgens, & Moscovici, 2000).

One way to overcome the common knowledge effect and confirmation bias is to ensure that group discussions build in sufficient time to share novel information, and time to challenge the status quo (Larson, Christensen, Franz, & Abbott, 1998). Another way may be to assign specific topics as the responsibility of individual group members so each participant is responsible for bringing up relevant information. One or several members could be assigned the task to specifically bring new or novel ideas to the group. In relationships couples sometimes assign each other different household tasks. One partner may be responsible for paying bills on time, the other for making the children's medical or dental appointments. Research has shown that such combined memory is superior and more efficient than the memory of either person alone (Hollingshead, 2001).

3. Groupthink: The outcome of faulty thinking produced in highly cohesive groups
In highly cohesive groups the decision-making outcome is sometimes disastrous. Generally this occurs when there is great stress, and groups are under social pressure to achieve consensus. In American foreign policy we see many examples

of “group think” which has produced terrible consequences for the US and the world (Janis, 1972; 1982). Among the many fiasco’s that dominate the history of foreign policy in the US, we can mention several well-known to the world. The Kennedy administration, in its hostility to the Cuban revolution, sought to overthrow the Cuban government by sponsoring an invasion of about 1,400 counter revolutionaries trained by the CIA. Despite initial lies in the United Nations the role of the US soon became clear. The invasion force was decisively defeated and captured or killed after a couple of days combat. This event constituted a serious embarrassment to the US. History shows that the decision to attack Cuba was the outcome of conformity pressures in the council of the president that allowed the US to underestimate the popular support of the Cuban revolution, and demonize its leadership.

At another time in history Hitler and his group of cronies made a similar mistake in attacking the Soviet Union. Perhaps China also made such a mistake in attacking Vietnam. Another disastrous decision was the American war in Vietnam, and in particular the decision by the Johnson administration to send more troops to Vietnam. The outcome of that decision significantly increased the number of lives lost among American soldiers, and among the Vietnamese population. Other outcomes of groupthink include the decision by NASA to go ahead with the launch of the shuttle Challenger after being warned by the engineers that the O-ring seals might fail. This catastrophic failure happened and the rocket exploded killing all aboard. Probably you can think of many other examples from history in various European countries. The current foreign policy intervention of the Bush administration continues this pattern of foolish and disastrous decisions through its effort to “spread democracy” by invading sovereign nations. The Neocons responsible for current US policy (and their supporters elsewhere in the world) again seriously underestimated the will of their opponents to resist and inflict damage. As of this writing there is no solution to the bloodshed unleashed.

3.1 What is groupthink: antecedents, symptoms, and decisions

Groupthink refers to delusionary thinking that occur in highly cohesive groups where the pressure to reach consensus subverts critical thinking. Janis (1982) suggested that groupthink typically occurs in a highly cohesive group that is about to make an important decision for which it is not fully prepared. The group is excessively optimistic; it believes it is moral in decision-making and in full control of all important events, and therefore invulnerable. Within the group there is a strong desire for consensus that is achieved by suppressing dissenting information and discouraging the consideration of alternatives or the evaluation of undesired consequences. The group convinces itself that since it is morally superior there is no need to search for other relevant information. Further, since the group has no built-in procedure for evaluating alternatives to the one suggested or demanded at the start by the strong leader who chairs the group and strictly directs the deliberations.

Discussion within the group is limited and contributes to the unanimity with regard to the decision made. The group furthermore puts pressure on individual group members to conform. Dissenting group members are too fearful of rejection to object, and may even convince themselves that their doubts are not worth entertaining. There are no contingency plans made if things go wrong, because group members are convinced they are right. Moreover, portraying the opponent in demonic terms assists this process of delusion as stereotypes always fall short of reality. The stereotyping of historical enemies in European history led to some of the greatest policy failures in wartime. Groupthink results in shallowness in decision making due to the lack of information and the narrow or non-existent consideration of alternatives for action.

Groupthink as a concept has intuitive appeal and utility in examining many important historical decisions. The empirical evidence from the social psychological laboratory is more complex (Esser; 1998; Paulus, 1998). Tetlock, Peterson, McGuire, Chang, & Field (1992) found empirical support for the concept in 12 different political decisions. The factors suggested by Janis do not all find support in the laboratory, but the delusion effect of dynamic and controlling leadership is by and large confirmed. Janis' work points to the obvious problems that derive from self-censorship, and from decisions in the group to withhold information inconsistent with the one proposed. We also know that strong leaders can and do stifle discussion. If groups want to prevent fiascoes there are steps they can take, which will improve the decision making process.

If anything, groupthink illustrates the processes that encourage the use of discussion to justify preconceived ideas. Groups have a tendency to focus on single solutions, when complex problems demand multiple reactions to difficult problems. Concurrence seeking produces groups that are robotic and "strain toward uniformity" rather than include the required complexity (Nemeth & Staw, 1989). Once the most influential individuals in the group opt for a course of action competing ideas have little chance of emerging. Arguments tend to become more one-sided as discussion proceeds, and since group members hear only one side, the discussion also tends to breed overconfidence.

It is not just cohesiveness that produces groupthink. Many marriages are very cohesive, but have built into their relationship acceptance of disagreement. This of course is also possible for other relationships and groups, regardless of their function or purpose.

3.2 The prevention of groupthink

If a group wants to come to decisions that are useful, effective, and correspond to the real world, there are steps to be taken to achieve that goal. Obviously a freer discussion in the group allowing for all opinions to be heard might avoid some of the disasters that have occurred in our past history. It would also be helpful if the leader did not state a strong opinion at the very beginning of the deliberation, but is helpful by welcoming all information and viewpoints. The group as a whole must also make sure that outside information is welcome and desired, and must provide room for critique. To prevent rash action the group could assign one or several people to play the "devil's advocate", i.e., to argue the contrary point at every step of the process. In that manner some of the weaknesses of the proposed action may be illuminated before action is taken. The leader could also divide the group into subgroups with different responsibilities, and then bring them together to confront their separate recommendations. Finally, the group could seek anonymous opinion that would offer no risk of rejection.

These points are summarized by Janis (1982) to for leaders to prevent encouraging groupthink:

1. Tell the individual members what groupthink is, and tell them about the major antecedents and consequent faulty decisions. Be open-minded, do not favor any position at the beginning of deliberations.
2. Encourage group members to be critical and skeptical, encourage doubts about any proposed solution.
3. Ask specific members to play the role of "devil's advocate" i.e., questioning and arguing the opposite side of every issue.
4. Subdivide the group to evaluate the decision separately, then join the members together to compare evaluations.
5. In decisions affecting rival groups seek to understand all possible reactions by these groups. Is the proposed decision good for the group in the long run?

6. After the decision is made schedule a second "last chance" meeting to review, once more, any final doubts.
7. Invite experts, not members of the group to evaluate decisions, and have these experts attend separate meetings.
8. Encourage group members to consult with knowledgeable associates and have them report back their reactions.
9. Encourage groups that are independent from each other to work on the problem and to come up with their independent recommendations.
These are recommendations that should be adopted by decision makers at any level of society. Obviously the more critical the problem and consequences, the more important it is for the leader to prevent groupthink.

3.3 The power of the minority
History is replete with examples of the power of minorities on social practice and debate. While group influence is overpowering for most individuals, a minority can, by following certain principles, change group opinion. Think for a moment about all the social movements in history, where a minority, even a minority of one, swayed the powerful majority and caused a rupture with the past. The Copernicus revolution removing the earth from the central role in our planetary system is one example. Galileo was another minority of one who proposed the correct dimensions of the earth despite grave threats by the establishment. The right to vote for women was not a free gift by men, but occurred as a result of very brave women and men who in the minority fought for decades against all odds. The abolitionists who struggled to end slavery were long a despised minority in the US, but eventually their view won in a terrible civil war.

Minorities can have great influence when they follow several research-based behaviors. Moscovici et al. (1969; 1985) showed that three principles are of primary importance for success. The first is consistence. If the minority is consistent and does not waver in its proposed course of action, the consistency is likely to produce change in others. When the minority follows the majority it is most likely due to conformity pressures. However, when the majority changes its mind in the direction of the minority, it is because the majority has been encouraged to do so and to reflect more carefully its decisions by the consistency of minority opposition. When dissent occurs within a group, people sometimes become aware of new information, and think of new and novel ways to solve problems. A consistent minority may encourage creative thinking on task solutions. In the jury system a minority may sway the majority by being persistent and consistent (Nemeth, 1979).

Self-confidence shows that the minority believes in the validity of its arguments. If the minority does not consistently display self-confidence it raises red flags in the minds of the majority. A timid minority creates the impression that its objections are not valid and that the minority is incompetent. The self-confidence by which the minority addresses issues, on the other hand, influence and change positions (Nemeth & Wachtler, 1974). When the minority confidently and continually puts forward its point of view, it disrupts the conception of unanimity that the majority relies on for conformity. As the discussion proceeds in the group those in the majority who have censored themselves in pursuit of unanimity may begin to speak out more freely. Once such defection occurs, it starts a process of self-evaluation within the majority that causes more defections as a defecting person begins to have more credibility with the majority (Levine, 1989). Defection to the minority matters for both the minority and the majority by assuring the minority and casting doubt on the majority position. Conversely, the minority would also be influenced if one of their members joined the majority (Wolf, 1987).
Since practically any worthwhile position was once a minority position it is toward social minorities we must place our hope for improvement in society and groups. The majority will always conform or sit on the fence. Only the minority possesses the fortitude to continue working toward the cause they believe is right, whether to improve education, science or other facets of community life.

3.4 The cultural view: The phenomena of groupthink in other nations
Is groupthink primarily a phenomenon of extreme conformity processes in Western cultures? We have seen how critical situations (Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba and the war in Vietnam) caused US decision makers to make faulty decisions with terrible consequences for millions of people. Are other cultures equally affected by groupthink? Do we have any reasons to believe they are not, or are other cultures perhaps even more conformist? Eastern cultures often stress harmony at the expense of individuality. Might the drive for harmony elicit even more efforts toward group cohesion at the expense of reality-based decisions? Nisbett (2003) found evidence in his study that groupthink is very significant in East Asian cultures. Every effort is made so participants in decisions and meetings do not “lose face” through unexpected conflict. Often there is no true debate in the group context. In Japan groupthink is so powerful, even in scientific

meetings, that there is rarely any real debate that might be considered confrontational. In fact, Japanese science is under performing given the large amount of resources dedicated to research and knowledge (French, 2001).

How can we then explain the apparent contradiction that many Japanese companies do extremely well in international markets, and even dominate some sectors? Japanese managers have found a different way as they meet individually with decision-making participants prior to the meeting to obtain consensus. The meeting is not for decision-making, but to articulate the already obtained consensus. Decision-making in other cultures is obviously a complex matter. In recent years Western managers were employed by Japanese companies like Sony, supposedly to shake up management, to get rid of unwanted employees, and to make the company more competitive. Is there a change in Japanese employment philosophy? Whereas before a worker had essentially a job for life, this system of patronage is disappearing in the face of global competition, and the American model that simply states that profit is all that matters is adopted.

4. Leadership in groups

Effective leadership would include the idea of minority influence. Real minority influence is absent in many present day parliamentary democracies. In many European countries manipulation of voter opinion ensures electoral victories, and getting elected and reelected seems the only goal. However, to guide and mobilize groups toward worthwhile goals requires individuals who are willing to go against the grain, and set new goals outside the current social frame. To act otherwise is to act in favor of social stagnation.

Many studies have shown that when leaders work with a democratic style it provides group satisfaction and improves productivity (Spector, 1986). People tend to thrive and take pride in achievements under democratic leadership. This has led some societies to experiment with participative management (Naylor, 1990). However, if such management styles are just adopted to increase productivity as a form of manipulation, and do not involve real power sharing, benefits will likely prove temporary and dependent on surveillance.

4.1 The role of gender in leadership

Women have had to deal with special gender based prejudice when they seek or exercise leadership positions. There is much research that supports the contention that male and female leaders are perceived and treated differently. If a

woman acts like a male, i.e. displays an authoritarian or forceful style of leadership, this is negatively evaluated (Eagly, Makhijani, Klonsky, 1992). While the negatively evaluation of female leaders is found in both sexes it is especially present in males. Males react more negatively to “bossy” styles that run counter to traditional female roles in society.
Gender roles have been in great flux over the past decades as more and more women enter the work force, and as gender equality is being sought in all arenas of economic and social life. In universities there are now more women graduates than men, and they make up 46 percent of the work force in the US. Still less than 1 percent of top managers (CEO’s) of the Fortune 500 (largest) companies are women, and only 4 percent of other top management positions are held by women (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

We can observe two kinds of prejudice against women. If women behave in a communal fashion, i.e. show they are concerned about the welfare of others, are warm and affectionate, then they are perceived as weak in leadership. On the other hand if a woman claws her way to leadership by behaving like men in similar positions, she is evaluated negatively since these behaviors are perceived to be contrary to how women are expected to behave. So how can a woman win? If she acts consistent to expectations she is perceived to be weak. If she is more agentic, i.e., is more assertive and controlling, she is acting contrary to societal expectations (Carli & Eagly, 1999; Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Acceptance of changes in gender roles does not occur overnight. Many of the perceptions are very complex and nurtured by all the agents of society, in education, in the political system, in sub conscious culture. They affect self-concepts and self-esteem in many ways. The prejudice against women leaders seems to be receding (Twenge, 1997), as the percentage of men and women who prefer male bosses is decreasing. There is also a growing acceptance of the idea that good leaders should have the traditional characteristics of both genders. Those who are most effective in leadership may well be those who are both communal (affectionate) and also possess agentic (assertive) qualities.

5. Are risky decisions more likely made in groups?
In a series of experiments Stoner (1961) learned that groups, as a collective, are more likely to produce risky decisions as compared to individually made decisions. The participants in the experiment were asked to give advise to others on various courses of action which varied in risk to the individuals. For example,

should a person stay with a company that is secure, but only pays a modest salary or should he move to a company that is a risky venture, but might potentially have of a great pay off in the future? This decision is a problem that many face, and people vary greatly in their tolerance for risk.

But in addition to these individual differences Stoner also found a new phenomena of group behavior that he called the “risky shift”. Generally when people made decisions in groups they are more likely to recommend riskier decisions compared to when they evaluated the decision individually (Wallach, Kogan, & Bem, 1962). These studies revealed that the risky shift occurs when the group is seeking consensus after a relative brief discussion. Dissenting group members will often change their minds toward greater risk after such a brief discussion that perhaps does not allow for a consideration of all the consequences or an understanding of the risk.

The risky shift has serious implications for many group decisions. When the outcome is of great importance, perhaps it is best to follow the Japanese model and have people make individual decisions in pursuit of consensus. That is, when consensus really is not just another word for conformity sought in the individual consultation. However, as we frequently see in social psychology matters are not as simple as the earlier researchers thought.

5.1 Group polarization

Science is always self-correcting. It soon became apparent that the risky shift was not as simple as initially thought. Further research showed that groups did not make more risky decisions all of the time, it all depended on the initial views in the group. The group process produced more extreme decisions, i.e. groups tend to accentuate the already existing opinions. If these initial opinions tend toward more risk then the group process increases the risk level. If, however, the group predominantly expresses conservative opinions in the pre-decision phase, then the resulting decision would become even more conservative (Moscovice & Zavalloni, 1969; Myers & Bishop, 1971; Zuber, Crott & Werner, 1992).

Does polarization emerge in naturally occurring groups in society? Observe the conflict in the world where people from the same ethnic community, and with largely similar beliefs, are killing each other over dogma about ancient historical events. Terrorism does not occur suddenly without any antecedents. It occurs when people having grievances come together as is happening in ethnic communities throughout the world. As people with grievances interact moderating voices get lost since everyone wants to articulate these long suppressed hurts, and opinions become gradually more extreme (McCauley & Segal, 1987). Individuals isolated from facilitating groups would never commit the terrible acts of terrorism that we now see on a daily basis.

This group polarization effect has now been well established. In decisions and discussions the group favors more extreme viewpoints whether cautious or risky. Why is that the case? The literature provides us with several explanations. Group discussion elicits a pooling of ideas, which may include persuasive arguments not previously considered by group members (Stasser,1991).When people hear relevant arguments not previously considered, they sometimes shift their positions. So arguments or relevant information is important. Other times we change because we compare our viewpoint to that of others in the group. People will often not speak out until they can compare their views to that of others. This could be called ignorance of group opinion or "pluralistic ignorance" (Miller & McFarland,1987). Sometimes just hearing the opinions of others will produce a shift in the more cautious or risky direction.

The group is gathered in order to make a decision. Therefore the different arguments in favor of each course of action will have a hearing. However, since each side of the argument will present its viewpoint, more arguments will be heard from the side that had most of the initial support. Hearing more of a given side in an argument leads to the likelihood of others concurring, and since those presenting the arguments tend to have more extreme views, the majority in a group follows this polarization. To put it in other terms, the group discussion exposes the average member of the group to more arguments in favor of the position he already favored. Exposures to more arguments, and more extreme arguments by partisans of a given viewpoint, serve to strengthen the individual's initial inclinations, and we therefore observe group polarization.

Does the mere exposure to a pool of arguments produce more extreme viewpoints in the direction of the initial preferred course of action? Support for this contention is found in a number of studies (Burnstein & Vinokur, 1973; Clark, Crockett, & Archer, 1971). Group polarization is defined as the tendency for group decisions to be more extreme than those made by individuals in the direction of the group's initial positions. Results show that groups make more "extreme" positions than do individuals alone.

5.2 Group polarization and social comparison theory

The social comparison theory first advocated by Festinger (1954) suggests that we try to understand our world by comparing how we stand in relation to others (see also chapter 2). Such comparisons may have consequences for our identity and behavior (Stapel & Blanton, 2004; Suls & Wheeler, 2000). How do comparisons lead to group polarization? Most people think of themselves as favoring the more extreme "correct" position when compared to others. For example, if the socially valued course of action is to be cautious you may take an even more cautious position, whereas when the preferred action is risky you may advocate an even riskier position. People would be more cautious with the money of loved ones as that is considered the "correct" position, but perhaps more risky with money of their own.

The group context therefore becomes somewhat more risky for issues where a risky course is favored initially and somewhat more conservative on issues for which initial caution is considered the right decision. In the desire to be different from others we adopt more polarized viewpoints, but always in the "right" direction, that position which is favored initially by the group (Brown 1965; Ohtsubo, Masuchi, & Nakanishi, 2002; Rodrigo & Ato, 2002). This result is explained by the commonly accepted idea that people like to be liked and we want to be accepted. In the process of striving for acceptance we learn the values of our group. To be accepted and liked and viewed in a positive light, we support group values and show our leadership in the direction of the accepted opinion (Blaskovich, Ginsburg, & Veach, 1975, Zuber, Crott, & Werner, 1992).

5.3 The cultural view: Do some societies value risk more than others?

The initial studies on group polarization were carried out on US students, and the majority of results displayed the risky shift described above. But do all cultures favor risk? Western societies find risk taking is behavior to be admired (Madaras & Bem, 1968). For example, risk takers are seen as possessing more favorable positive traits. In one study risk takers were seen to be more creative, more intelligent, more socially confident, as compared to the cautious (Jellison & Riskind, 1970). The appreciation of risk taking comes from the broader capitalist culture that dominates thinking in Western societies. Such a culture actively encourages risk taking, and views as necessary the possibility of failure and loss. This may explain why we find more risk taking behavior in Western cultures (Gologor, 1977).

Whereas risk taking is admired in Western societies (Madaras & Bem, 1968) and risk takers are perceived in these cultures as more competent (Jellison & Riskind, 1970), cross-cultural studies of risk taking show that Africans value caution more as compared to Western respondents (Carlson & Davis, 1971;Gologor, 1977). These findings demonstrate again the importance of checking out all research results from a cultural perspective since we know cultural values to be of fundamental importance in any decision-making.

5.4 Polarization today

There are so many events that can be used as examples of the polarization effect. The most recent to come to mind is the furor throughout the Islamic world over the cartoons published in a Danish newspaper depicting the prophet Muhammad. None reacted to these cartoons for months, except for a small group of Danish Muslims. They got together, discussed the cartoons and eventually held a protest rally in Copenhagen. When that did not have the desired impact they decided to take the case to the Islamic world meeting with religious figures from Egypt to Saudi Arabia. This course of action inflamed opinions further. Only then did extreme opinions really begin to take over the debate with Danish embassies being closed down in Syria and elsewhere, the Danish flag burned, and a boycott of Danish products being enacted in the Arab world. This was followed by further riots and the death of scores of people.

This all started with cartoons that were initially thought to be very funny by the majority of Danes, and that were intended to attack the self-censorship thought to exist in Danish newspapers. The riots probably reinforced this censorship by reinforcing taboos, although the extremity of these taboos was a product of polarization. The gap between civilizations was not decreased as a result of this process in group polarization as moderate voices were drowned out by the clamor of extreme opinions. Modern means of communication like the Internet are not moderating voices since people will primarily select the information they agree with, and ignore other perspectives. Hate groups make good use of the Internet, and the group polarization effect represented there simply feed extremist views.

A dialogue between varying viewpoints may help, but not if it is confrontational or argumentative. Nothing but polarization occurs as a result of argumentative interaction. A truly multiethnic worldview would accept not only that differences exist, but also that these are desirable (Van der Veer, 2003). The absolute truth is not present in any viewpoint, hence respect for sincerity, and honesty and a complete right to differ on any topic within broad humanitarian values is required.

6. Conflict or cooperation in groups

Whenever two or more people gather there is an opportunity for conflict. That is true for groups as small as couples, as well as nations. Often our goals and needs clash, and at times goals are totally incompatible. If we examine the world just in our lifetime, or even the past few decades, we see everywhere the distressing results of conflict and destruction. At the smallest group level of marriage the divorce rate in the Western world is distressingly high approaching 50 percent. Perhaps that has something to do with the changing gender roles and the inability of people to adjust.

The murder rate in the US has justified it being called the murder capital of the civilized world. When we examine violence at the level of nations, warfare has not only increased in severity and brutality, but also in frequency during the 20th century (Levy & Morgan, 1984). There is nothing to encourage us to think that this pattern of violence is changing in the future, only the combatants change. Social psychologists, along with specialists in other fields, have been involved in research that aims at addressing these problems and learning how to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Game theory, as exemplified in the prisoners' dilemma game, has been used extensively as a framework for the study of conflict in the social psychological laboratory to understand how we can increase cooperation and trust.

Competitive actions increase the level of distrust until conflict ensues (Batson & Ahmad, 2001). When two systems are locked into an arms race the dominating fear is that the other side will take advantage of any weakness. Consequently arms are stockpiled to the point of absurdity. We now have in the world enough nuclear weapons not only to destroy the world once, but many times over. The arms race is a loss for everyone as is any conflict. This monster, which dominates the economies of most nations, eats up massive resources that could be used for the betterment of the world.

Some research has suggested the efficacy of a "tit for tat " strategy in order to encourage cooperation (Axelrod, 1984; Parks & Rumble, 2001;Van Lange, Ouwerkerk, & Tazelaar, 2002). This strategy of conflict management involves a group taking the initial step toward cooperation and thereby inviting reciprocation. Tit for tat requires us to respond to the opponent's reaction. If a cooperative reaction is elicited then 'tit for tat" calls for rewarding the opponent with more cooperation, and thereby build more trust. If the response is not cooperative then the option remains to escalate the competition. One can only wonder where the world would be if such a conciliatory strategy had been employed in the past. Cuba has made many conciliatory gestures toward the United States over the past decades, but each has been received with disdain and more conflict. However, a strategy based on threats has been shown to be totally ineffective (Deutsch & Kraus, 1960; 1962; & Turner & Horvitz, 2001).

6.1 Negotiating and bargaining toward a solution to conflict

To end any conflict it is necessary to negotiate. Unless both parties come to an agreement there is no way to end the conflict. That is one reason why unilateral decisions by a powerful actor will not work in the long run. The state of Israel is in longstanding conflict with the Palestinian people who inhabited the space upon which Israel is now located. Israel has decided to withdraw from some, but not all of the territory that belonged to the Palestinian people prior to the 1967 war. In support of this they are building a wall the length of the country to effectively partition what they want to leave to the Palestinians. This wall not only places many Palestinians in second-class citizenship within the state of Israel, but also makes a viable state for the Palestinians almost impossible. Unilateral decision-making will probably result in a conflict that will be with us for decades to come.

Negotiations require people to communicate with opponents directly, and are based on the idea that there are solutions that are acceptable to all parties to the conflict. The ideal form of negotiation or bargaining will take into account the most and least important issues to each party. In that way each party compromises more on issues of less importance but still of some importance to the opposing side. For example, for the Palestinians the return of refugees and the status of East Jerusalem as a capital of Palestine are probably among the most important issues in the conflict. A viable peace would seem most important to Israel. Giving up territory in exchange for peace is then the only viable option. The devil is in the details. When we distrust the other side we develop biased perceptions of the opponent, distrust their proposals, and overlook the obvious interests that they all have in common (O'Connor & Carnvale, 1997).

However, it is not always easy to identify such integrative solutions. Distrust makes it nearly impossible for people to see communalities in search for solutions. Intractability calls for the services of mediators trusted by both sides whose role is to identify integrative solutions beneficial to both sides for a negotiated end to conflict. Such mediators have been at work in nearly all past international conflicts since war rarely results in any decisive victory. The mediations have had varying success. Some conflicts like a union's request for pay raises can be bargained since both management and workers can identify solutions that would benefit both sides. Conflicts based on deeply held values are much more difficult to mediate.

Summary

Membership in groups is central to our lives, and therefore also to the discipline of social psychology. People join groups because membership entails many benefits related to survival and other social needs. There are those who would propose an evolutionary need for groups, as people in isolation often experience severe psychological stress.

A group is two or more people who are in a state of interaction. Crowds are not groups, nor are other gatherings that do not have the inherent property of interaction. Group structure follows quickly upon formation of a group as leader roles, group norms, and status of members are swiftly identified. Generally people seek out like-minded people when joining groups. Most people want reinforcement of their beliefs and attitudes and do not seek challenges to their deeply held worldviews.

Groups define the roles we play. In work groups these are often specified to a degree that allows for little ambiguity. Clearly defined roles produce satisfaction and improved production. Unfortunately, sometimes roles take over the identity of the individual as we see in the Zimbardo study. In that study on prison simulation, and in real life, guards became brutal and prisoners submissive in response to the roles imposed.

Gender roles are in a state of constant change. In recent decades we have observed some improvement in women's struggle for equality, but the process is slow (Eurostat 2007)∗. That of course does not of itself overcome the long-term effects of culture. In capitalist societies progress in women's rights has followed major social changes, and the struggles of brave women and men. Gender conflict remains in all societies due in part to the greater demands made on women who work outside the home, and the strain to adjust to changing roles and demands at home.

A strong feeling of friendship is the most important characteristic of cohesive groups. Such groups tend to be more effective and less dysfunctional than groups manifesting conflict. Some groups are only temporary; others are for life especially those that have common purposes and goals. When members accept goals and like each other the group is likely to be cohesive.

Group membership is important because people at times act different when in groups. The research on social facilitation shows that groups energize people on simple tasks leading to higher performance levels, but hurts performance on complex tasks. On complex tasks evaluation anxiety may be diverting or distracting the individual away from task solutions.

Crowding is experienced as stressful and therefore different from physical density. At sporting events crowding may intensify feelings leading to hooligan behavior on the part of fans, and in other situations to lynching in the US. Crowding is therefore a subjective feeling of not having sufficient space, which can produce sensory overloads and feelings of loss of control. However, if one is distracted as perhaps when watching a favored sport team, the physical density of the fans may not be stressful or experienced as crowding. On the other hand a long trip on a bus may produce the feeling of not having sufficient space although among fewer people. The research indicates that in some cultures physical density experienced as crowding in Western societies is not experienced as such in Asia. The Asian cultures have developed elaborate cultures of courtesy that allows people to live with high density and still maintain necessary distance and privacy.

We all know those in our task groups that loaf. Social loafing is manifested when individuals give minimal efforts. It occurs mostly in situations where individual efforts cannot be identified, or the task has little meaning. When the individual is submerged in the group, task behavior may suffer as a consequence. Social loafing is greatest among strangers, least among friends and family where there is a sense of shared responsibility. When the task is meaningful some individuals will compensate for others inadequacy, and step up individual contributions.

Life has demonstrated cultural differences in social loafing. In all cases examined, collective farming in the former socialist societies did poorly as compared to private farming. At the same time we have the example of the socialist Kibbutz system in Israel that out produced private farming. Clearly it is not social production that leads to loafing, but rather the feeling of lack of ownership of production and management. Differences within society reveal that women, who have more communal feelings, are also less likely to loaf.

Overall, when individual efforts are appreciated, known and rewarded, when the task is challenging, and the group goals accepted, social loafing is less an obstruction in society. These findings can be applied to work situations by ensuring sufficient surveillance of work on simple tasks, and individual evaluations. Open spaces are encouraged for work on simple tasks. On complex tasks open spaces may be distracting as such work requires more privacy.
Deindividuation is where the individual experiences a loss of identity, and the normal restraints that come from having acquired personal values. People do things in groups they would never do when alone. Le Bon referred to this phenomenon as a form of social contagion where impulsive and destructive behavior takes the place of rational evaluations. When in a situation of deindividuation people are less concerned about the evaluations of others, partly from the anonymity afforded by large crowds. Many negative behaviors may result from deindividuation including suicide baiting, lynching, and war.

In large crowds deindividuation is more likely, and conformity greater. If the norms are violent we observe the destructive consequences. In war the controlling parties do all that is possible to deindividuate individual combatants. In some societies paint is worn to reduce individuality and evaluation. In modern societies uniforms play a similar role of reducing normal restraint toward brutality. Therefore, if we are interested in reducing deindividuation we have to find some way to have the combatants focus inward and become more self-conscious. In the process of individuation and self-consciousness, personal values will play a larger role in restraining unethical behavior.

One important area in the social psychology of groups involves an understanding of group decisions. Are these superior to individual decisions; are two heads better than one? If we rely on expert opinion we may avert process loss, and the kinds of communication problems that interfere with good decisions. However, under some circumstances group decisions are worse than individual opinion, worse than making no decision at all.

One problem of the group process is that generally only information known to all group members is shared in making the decision, and novel viewpoints are held back. It is easier to discuss commonly shared information, but perhaps the novel idea is key to a competent decision. One way to avoid the problem is to ensure that the group has sufficient time, as novel solutions would generally come after the common information is shared.

Groupthink has had great impact on some disastrous foreign policy decisions in the West, and perhaps similar decisions can be identified in other countries. Groupthink occurs in highly cohesive groups when they are under stress to achieve consensus. It involves faulty thinking based in part on stereotypes of opponents, feelings of moral superiority and invulnerability. The prevention of groupthink involves good leadership that not only allows, but also seeks complete free discussion, and is open to all points of view. Groupthink is mindless conformity that seeks to justify preconceived ideas.
However, minorities make history. Research has shown that when minorities display consistency in holding to a course of action, when they display self-confidence, and when they can elicit defections from the majority, they can indeed change history. Effective leadership comes from those who are willing to go against the grain. Also research shows pretty conclusively that democratic leadership not only is most satisfying to followers, but also is most effective in task completion.

Women's roles have changed drastically in the last decades from being homemakers to winning a place in the larger industrial society. The world is changing, but women often find themselves in a double bind. If they act in more traditional communal ways they are perceived as weak in leadership, if they act in more masculine agentic ways they are perceived as less feminine. Some research indicates that the best leadership in society comes from those who can combine these traits.

Can we find examples of groupthink in other cultures and nations? There is great evidence of the existence groupthink in Asian cultures. It is thought by some that there is no value in holding decision-making meetings in collectivist cultures as decisions are made prior to any meeting. On the other hand there is more evidence of pre meeting consultation in for example Japanese companies, so the actual meeting is just to make formal the consensus already established. The real question is: is the process of consultation just another way of seeking conformity and agreement with the preconceived ideas of the leadership? Perhaps globalization makes cultural differences less relevant. As more nations adapt to globalization where the profit motive is the overriding concern, cultural differences become less important.

Are group decisions more risky? Yes, when groups seek consensus the risky shift in the direction of more risky decisions occurs, at least in the US. However, later research on group polarization shows that for most interaction the group decision will be primarily more extreme in the direction of the already dominant opinion whether risky or cautious. The reasons include the persuasion argument that shows that exposure to the quantity and persuasiveness of dominant arguments moves group members toward more extreme views. Also the social comparison argument shows that we like to compare ourselves to others, and to be ahead of others toward the "correct" position. There are some cultural differences with Western societies producing more risky responses and less so in some other cultures examined. Again globalization works toward more uniformity of values that may erase any cultural differences in the long run.
The world shows many examples of the devastating polarization occurring in attitudes and opinions prior to our wars and conflicts. Social psychologists have tried to address these issues in laboratory simulations utilizing game theory. These simulations support the strategy of taking initial cooperative steps, followed by rewarding cooperation by opponents. The initial cooperative strategy is most successful since threats have no useful function. For conflict to end the parties must find ways to communicate. Finding integrative solutions, which benefit both parties, is at times both difficult and complex. When the issue is about land or deeply held values, compromises through negotiation are not a likely outcome. On other matters like economic disputes, negotiation may bring about settlements that end conflict and provide mutually acceptable solutions.