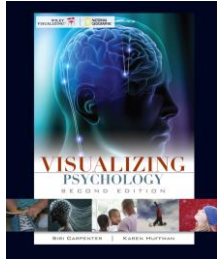




# CHAPTER 15

## Social Psychology



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### Lecture Overview

- [Social Cognition](#)
- [Social Influence](#)
- [Social Relations](#)
- [Applying Social Psychology to Social Problems](#)



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### Introductory Definition



**Social Psychology:** scientific study of how people's thoughts, feelings, & actions are affected by others

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## Our Thoughts About Others

- **Attributions:** explanations for behaviors or events
- To determine the cause, we first decide whether the behavior comes from an:
  - *internal (dispositional)* cause, such as personal characteristics, or
  - *external (situational)* cause, such as situational demands.

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## Our Thoughts About Others: Mistaken Attributions

1. **Fundamental Attribution Error:** misjudging causes of others' behavior as stemming from *internal (dispositional)* vs. *external (situational)* causes



- **Saliency bias** may help explain this focus on dispositional causes.

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## Our Thoughts About Others: Mistaken Attributions



**Self-Serving Bias:**  
favoring internal attributions for our successes & externalizing our failures

“blaming the victim”  
Actor - Observer

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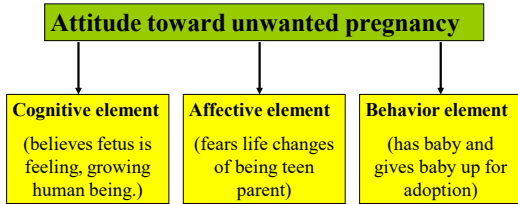
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### Our Thoughts About Others

- **Attitude:** learned predisposition to respond cognitively, affectively, & behaviorally to a particular object in a particular way




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### Our Thoughts About Others: Cognitive Dissonance

- **Cognitive Dissonance:** feeling of discomfort caused by a discrepancy between two conflicting thoughts or between an attitude & a behavior




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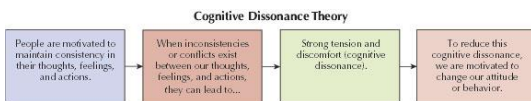
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### Our Thoughts About Others: Cognitive Dissonance (Continued)




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# Our Thoughts About Others: Cognitive Dissonance Continued

- Festinger & Carlsmith's **Cognitive Dissonance** Study. Participants given VERY boring tasks to complete, & then paid either \$1 or \$20 to tell next participant the task was "very enjoyable" & "fun."



- Result?




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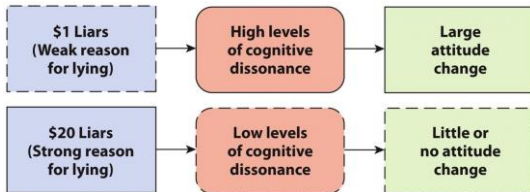
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- Those paid \$1 experienced greater **cognitive dissonance**, & therefore changed their attitude more than those paid \$20.




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## Pause & Reflect: Assessment

Misjudgment of behavior as stemming from internal rather than external causes

1. What is the **fundamental attribution error**?
2. Accordi cognitive dissonance ople are motivated to change their attitudes because of tension created by a discrepancy between an attitude & a behavior or between two or more competing attitudes.




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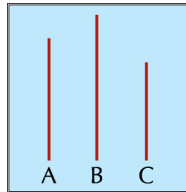
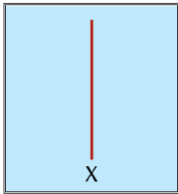
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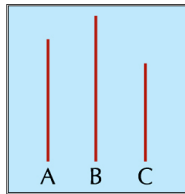
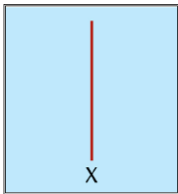
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### Our Actions Toward Others: Social Influence

- **Conformity:** changing behavior because of real or imagined group pressure
- **Obedience:** following direct commands, usually from an authority figure




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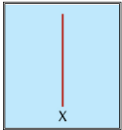
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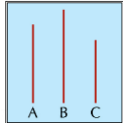


### Our Actions Toward Others: Conformity



#### Asch's Conformity Study

- Participants were asked to select the line closest in length to X.
- When confederates first gave obviously wrong answers (A or C), more than 1/3 of true subjects conformed & agreed with the incorrect choices.




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### Our Actions Toward Others: Conformity (Continued)

Why do we conform?

- **Normative Social Influence:** need for approval & acceptance
- **Informational Social Influence:** need for information & direction
- **Reference Groups:** we conform to people we like & admire because we want to be like them




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### Our Actions Toward Others: Obedience

- Obedience: following a direct command, usually from an authority figure.
- Conform and obey = own best interest
- Allows safety, order, & predictability
- Sometimes it is important not to conform or obey




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### Our Actions Toward Others: Obedience

- Milgram’s obedience study: Participants serving as “teachers” were ordered to continue shocking someone with a known heart condition who is begging to be released.
- Result? 65% of “teachers” delivered highest level of shock (450 volts) to the pseudo-heart condition “learner.”

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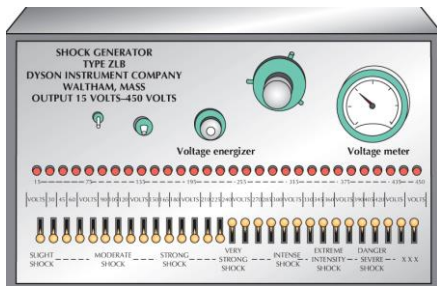
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### Milgram’s Shock Generator




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### Our Actions Toward Others: Obedience (Continued)

Major factors affecting obedience:

1. legitimacy & closeness of the authority figure
2. remoteness of the victim
3. assignment of responsibility
4. modeling/imitation

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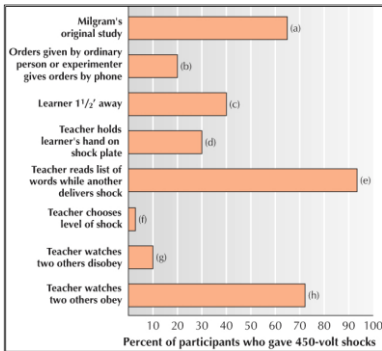
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## Obedience

- Socialization
- Foot-in-the-door technique
- Relaxed moral guard
- Dissent




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## Pause & Reflect: Critical Thinking

- How would you have behaved if you were a "teacher" in Milgram's obedience studies? Would you have given the highest level of shocks? What about your best friend or parents? Would their behavior differ from yours? Why & how?

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## Group Processes: "Power of the Situation"

Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Study

- Students were randomly assigned to play the role of either "prisoner" or "guard."
- Original study, scheduled for 2 weeks, was stopped after 6 days due to serious psychological changes in both "prisoners" & "guards."




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## Our Actions Toward Others: Group Processes

- Group membership involves:
  - **Roles:** set of behavioral patterns connected with particular social positions
  - **Deindividuation:** anonymity leads to reduced inhibition, self-consciousness, & personal responsibility




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## Group Processes: Problems with Decision Making

- **Group Polarization:** group movement toward either a riskier or more conservative decision; result depends on the members' initial dominant tendency
- **Groupthink:** faulty decision making occurring when a highly cohesive group seeks agreement & avoids inconsistent information




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## Our Actions Toward Others: Group Processes (Continued)

Symptoms of **Groupthink**:

- Illusion of invulnerability
- Belief in group's morality
- Collective rationalizations
- Stereotypes of out-groups
- Self-censorship
- Illusion of unanimity
- Direct pressure on dissenters




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## Pause & Reflect: Assessment

1. Groupthink: faulty decision making.  
Group polarization: behavior toward one extreme.
2. Gradual increase in requests toward ultimate goal
3. Normative social influence  
Informational social influence  
Reference groups

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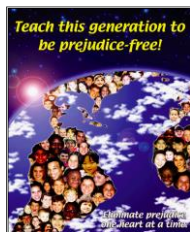
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## Our Feelings About Others: Prejudice & Discrimination

- **Prejudice**: learned, generally negative, attitude toward members of a group
- **Discrimination**: negative actions directed toward members of a group




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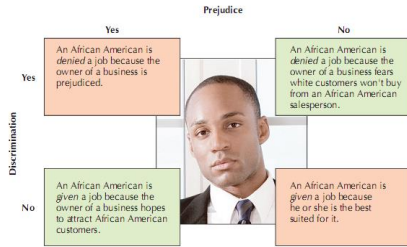
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Prejudice and discrimination FIGURE 15.5

Note how prejudice can exist without discrimination, and vice versa.

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### Three Components of Prejudice

1. *Cognitive* (thoughts associated with objects of prejudice)  
**Stereotype:** set of beliefs about the characteristics of people in a group generalized to *all* group members
2. *Affective* (feelings associated with objects of prejudice)
3. *Behavioral* (actions associated with objects of prejudice)  
**Discrimination:** negative behaviors directed at members of a group

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### Pause & Reflect: Assessment

1. Briefly explain how **prejudice** differs from **discrimination**.

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### Sources of Prejudice & Discrimination



- Learning
- Mental Shortcuts
- Economic & Political Competition for Limited Resources
- Displaced Aggression (“scapegoating”)

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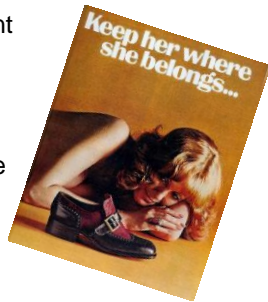
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### Sources of Prejudice: Learning

- Classical and operant conditioning
- Social learning
- Direct experience
- Generalizing a single negative experience




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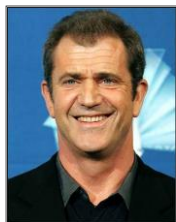
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### Sources of Prejudice: Mental Shortcuts

- **Implicit Bias:** prejudice occurs without conscious awareness or control
- **Implicit Bias:** hidden attitude activated by the mere encounter of an attitude object; may serve as a guide to behaviors independent of a person’s awareness & control




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### Sources of Prejudice

- Mental Shortcuts - continued
  - **Ingroup Favoritism:** ingroup viewed more positively than outgroup
  - **Outgroup Homogeneity Effect:** outgroup judged as less diverse than ingroup
- Competition for limited resources
- Displaced aggression
  - scapegoat




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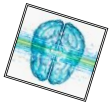
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### Pause & Reflect: Critical Thinking

- Do you believe you are free of **prejudice**?  
Would you be friends &/or date people within all ethnic groups? If you're heterosexual, would you share a college dorm room with someone who is gay or lesbian? Why or why not?

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### Pause & Reflect: Psychology & Life

- Psychology provides scientific research & insight into social problems, like **prejudice** & destructive **obedience**. Psychologists also produce concrete suggestions for reducing these problems.

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### Applying Social Psychology to Social Problems

- Prejudice & Discrimination
- Destructive Obedience




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### Applying Social Psychology to Social Problems

- How can we reduce prejudice & discrimination?
  - Encourage cooperation & common goals
  - Intergroup contact
  - Cognitive retraining
  - Employ cognitive dissonance




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### Applying Social Psychology to Social Problems:

- How can we reduce destructive obedience?
  1. Adjust socialization toward obedience
  2. Recognize power of the situation
  3. Protect against groupthink
  4. Avoid foot-in-the-door technique: making a small request followed by increasingly larger requests
  5. Guard against relaxed moral guard
  6. Increase disobedient models




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### Our Actions Toward Others: Aggression

- **Aggression:** any behavior intended to harm someone




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### Our Actions Toward Others: Aggression (Continued)

- Biological factors in **aggression:**
  - instincts, genes, brain & nervous system, substance abuse & other mental disorders, hormones, & neurotransmitters




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### Aggression

- Psychosocial factors in **aggression:**
  - substance/alcohol abuse
  - aversive stimuli
  - culture & learning
  - frustration
  - violent media/ video games




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### Our Actions Toward Others: Aggression (Continued)



How can we control or reduce **aggression**?

- Catharsis? (Doesn't really work)
- Introduce incompatible responses (e.g., humor)
- Improve social & communication skills

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### Our Actions Toward Others: Altruism

- **Altruism**: actions designed to help others with no obvious benefit to the helper




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### Our Actions Toward Others: Altruism

- Why do we help?
  - **Evolutionary Model**: favors survival of one's genes
  - **Egoistic Model**: helping motivated by anticipated gain
  - **Empathy-Altruism Model**: helping motivated by empathy




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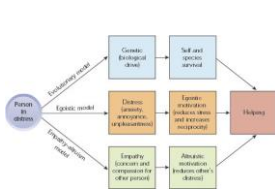
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## Our Actions Toward Others: Altruism




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## Our Actions Toward Others: Altruism

### Why Don't We Help?

- Latane & Darley's Diffusion 5-Step model
  - Diffusion of Responsibility: dilution, or *diffusion*, of personal responsibility




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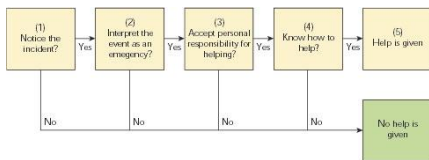
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## Latane & Darley's 5-Step Decision Process for Helping



Is it unclear if the person needs help?

**ASK!**

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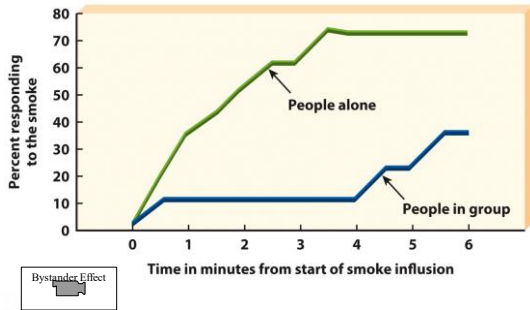
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### The Bystander Effect




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### Pause & Reflect: Assessment

1. Name some of the factors in aggression.
2. What are the best ways to reduce aggression & increase altruism?




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### Our Feelings About Others: Interpersonal Attraction

- **Interpersonal Attraction:** positive feelings toward another



- Three Key Factors:
  - **Physical Attractiveness**
  - **Proximity:** geographic closeness
  - **Similarity:** in values

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## Our Feelings About Others: Interpersonal Attraction

- **Romantic Love:** intense attraction & excitement



- **Companionate Love:** lasting attraction based on admiration, respect, trust, caring, & commitment

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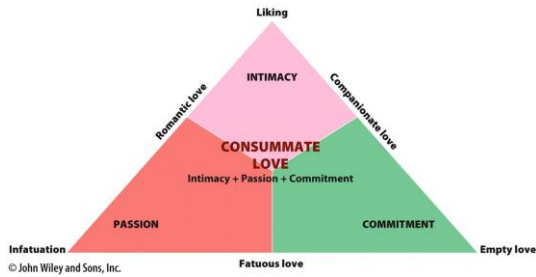
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## Sternberg's Triarchic Theory of Love




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### Pause & Reflect: Assessment

1. Romantic: mystery and fantasy  
Companionate: strong and lasting
2. Physical attractiveness  
Proximity  
Similarity
3. Intimacy  
Passion  
Commitment




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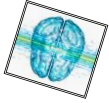
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### Pause & Reflect: Critical Thinking

- Chapter 15 is often the last chapter covered in a general psychology course. If this is true for you, stop & take the time to list the *TOP 5 to 10 concepts or terms* that you want to remember & possibly apply in your everyday life.




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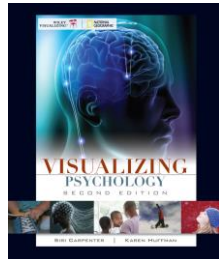
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## End of CHAPTER 15

### Social Psychology




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