SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Social Psychology can be defined as the scientific field that seeks to understand the nature and causes of individual behavior, feelings, and thought in social situations. Another way to put this is to say that social psychology investigates the ways in which our thoughts, feelings, and actions are influenced by the social environments in which we live—by other people or our thoughts about them.

CHAPTER 2

SOCIAL COGNITION

Social cognition can be defined as the manner in which we interpret, analyze, remember, and use information about the social world.

2.1: HEURISTICS

Representativeness heuristics: A strategy for making judgments based on the extent to which current stimuli or events resemble other stimuli or categories.

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

Anchoring and adjustment heuristics: A heuristic that involves the tendency to use a number of values as a starting point to which we then make adjustments.

2.2: SCHEMA

Schemas can be defined as the mental frameworks centering on a specific theme that help us to organize social information.

Priming: A situation that occurs when stimuli or events increase the availability in memory or consciousness of specific types of information held in memory.

Perseverance effect: The tendency for beliefs and schemas to remain unchanged even in the face of contradictory information.

2.3: SOURCES OF ERRORS IN SOCIAL COGNITION

Optimistic bias: Our predisposition to expect things to turn out well overall.

Overconfidence barrier: The tendency to have more confidence in the accuracy of our own judgments than is reasonable.

Planning fallacy: The tendency to make optimistic predictions concerning how long a given task will take for completion.

Counterfactual thinking: The tendency to imagine other outcomes in a situation than the ones that actually occurred ("What might have been").

Magical thinking: Thinking involving assumptions that don't hold up to rational scrutiny—for example, the belief that things that resemble one another share fundamental properties.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL PERCEPTION

Social process can be defined as the process through which we seek to know and understand other people.

3.1: NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Non-verbal communication can be defined as the communication between individuals that does not involve the content of spoken language. It relies instead on an unspoken language of facial expressions, eye contact, and body language.

Nonverbal cues provided by changes in their facial expressions, eye contact, posture, body movements, and other expressive actions. As noted by De Paulo et al. (2003), such behavior is relatively irrepressible—difficult to control—so that even when others try to conceal their inner feelings from us, these often "leak out" in many ways through nonverbal cues. The information conveyed by such cues, and our efforts to interpret this input, are often described by the term nonverbal communication (Ko, Judd, & Blair, 2006).

3.1.1: Basic Channels of Non-verbal Communication

Research findings indicate that five of these channels exist: facial expressions, eye contact, body movements and touching.

3.1.1.1: Facial Expressions

It is possible to learn much about others' current moods and feelings from their facial expressions. In fact, it appears that five different basic emotions are represented clearly, and from a very early age, on the human face: anger, fear, happiness, sadness, and disgust (Izard, 1991; Rozin, Lowery, & Ebert, 1994).

3.1.1.2: Eye Contact

We do often learn much about others' feelings from their eyes. For example, we interpret a high level of gazing from another as a sign of liking or friendliness (Kleinke, 1986). In contrast, if others avoid eye contact with us, we may conclude that they are unfriendly, don't like us, or are simply shy.

If another person gazes at us continuously and maintains such contact regardless of what we do, he or she can be said to be staring. A stare is often interpreted as a sign of anger

or hostility and most people find this particular nonverbal cue disturbing (Ellsworth & Carlsmith, 1973).

3.1.1.3: Body Language

Body language can be defined as the cues provided by the position, posture, and movement of others' bodies or body parts.

3.2: ATTRIBUTION

Attribution can be defined as the process of understanding the cause of others' behavior.

3.2.1: Theories of Attribution

3.2.1.1: Theory of Correspondent Interference

A theory describing how we use others' behavior as a basis for inferring their stable dispositions.

Jones and Davis's (1965) formulated theory of correspondent inference—asks how we use information about others' behavior as a basis for inferring their traits. In other words, the theory is concerned with how we decide, on the basis of others' overt actions, whether they possess specific traits or dispositions likely to remain fairly stable over time.

According to this theory, others' behavior provides us with a rich source on which to draw, so if we observe it carefully, we should be able to learn a lot about them. Up to a point, this is true. The task is complicated, however, by the following fact: Often, individuals act in certain ways not because doing so reflects their own preferences or traits, but rather because external factors leave them little choice. According to Jones and Davis's theory (Jones & Davis, 1965; Jones & McGillis, 1976), we accomplish this task by focusing our attention on certain types of actions—those most likely to prove informative.

First, we consider only behavior that seems to have been freely chosen, while largely ignoring ones that were somehow forced on the person in question. Second, we pay careful attention to actions that show what Jones and Davis term **noncommon effects**—effects that can be caused by one specific factor, but not by others. Finally, Jones and Davis suggest that we also pay greater attention to actions by others that are low in social desirability than to actions that are high on this dimension. In other words, we learn more about others' traits from actions they perform that are somehow out of the ordinary than from actions that are very much like those of most other people.

In sum, according to the theory proposed by Jones and Davis, we are most likely to conclude that others' behavior reflects their stable traits (i.e., we are likely to reach correspondent inferences about them), when that behavior (1) is freely chosen; (2) yields distinctive, noncommon effects; and (3) is low in social desirability.

3.2.1.2: Kelley's Theory of Causal Attributions

According to Kelley (1972), in our attempts to answer the why question about others' behavior, we focus on three major types of information.

- First, we consider **consensus**—*the extent to which other people react to a given stimulus or event in the same manner as the person we are considering*. The higher the proportion of people who react in the same way, the higher the consensus.
- Second, we consider **consistency**—*the extent to which the person in question reacts to the stimulus or event in the same way on other occasions, over time*.
- And third, we examine **distinctiveness**—*the extent to which this person reacts in the same manner to other, different stimuli or events.*

According to Kelley's theory, we are most likely to attribute another's behavior to internal causes under conditions in which consensus and distinctiveness are low but consistency is high. In contrast, we are most likely to attribute another's behavior to external causes when consensus, consistency, and distinctiveness are all high. Finally, we usually attribute another's behavior to a combination of internal and external factors when consensus is low but consistency and distinctiveness are high.

CHAPTER 4

THE SELF

4.1: SOCIAL COMPARISON THEORY

Festinger (1954) suggested that people compare themselves to others because for many domains and attributes there is no objective yardstick to evaluate ourselves against, and other people are therefore highly informative.

Upward Social Comparison: A comparison of the self to another who does better than or is superior to us.

Downward Social Comparison: A comparison of the self to another who does less well than or is inferior to us.

Above Average Effect: The tendency for people to rate themselves as above the average on most positive social attributes.

CHAPTER 5

ATTITUDES

Attitudes can be defined as our valuation of various aspects of the social world.

Explicit attitudes: Consciously accessible attitudes that are controllable and easy to report.

Implicit attitudes: Unconscious associations between objects and evaluative responses.

Pluralistic ignorance: When we collectively misunderstand what attitudes, others hold and believe erroneously that others have different attitudes than us.

Theory of reasoned action: A theory suggesting that the decision to engage in a particular behavior is the result of a rational process in which behavioral options are considered, consequences or outcomes of each are evaluated, and a decision is reached to act or not to act. That decision is then reflected in behavioral intentions, which strongly influence overt behavior.

Theory of planned behavior: An extension of the theory of reasoned action, suggesting that in addition to attitudes toward a given behavior and subjective norms about it, individuals also consider their ability to perform the behavior.

5.1: PERSUASION

Persuasion can be defined as efforts to change others' attitudes through the use of various kinds of messages.

5.1.1: Persuasion: Communicators, Messages and Audience

Persuasion research conducted by Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953) focused on these key elements, asking: "Who says what to whom with what effect?" This approach yielded a number of important findings, with the following being the most consistently obtained.

- Communicators who are credible—who seem to know what they are talking about or who are expert with respect to the topics or issues they are presenting—are more persuasive than those who are seen as lacking expertise.
- Communicators who are physically attractive are more persuasive than communicators who are not attractive (Hovland & Weiss, 1951).
- Messages that do not appear to be designed to change our attitudes are often more successful than those that seem to be designed to achieve this goal (Walster & Festinger, 1962).

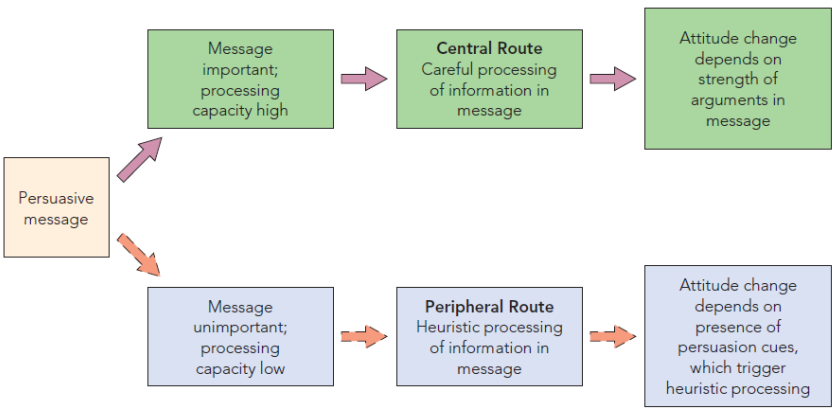
- One approach to persuasion that has received considerable research attention is the effect of **fear appeals**—messages that are intended to arouse fear in the recipient. Research found that When the message is sufficiently fear arousing that people genuinely feel threatened, they are likely to argue against the threat, or else dismiss its applicability to themselves (Liberman & Chaiken, 1992; Taylor & Shepperd, 1998).

5.1.2: Elaboration-Likelihood Model of Persuasion

A theory suggesting that persuasion can occur in either of two distinct ways, differing in the amount of cognitive effort or elaboration the message receives.

The elaboration-likelihood model (ELM; e.g., Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty et al., 2005) and the heuristic-systematic model (e.g., Chaiken, Liberman, & Eagly, 1989; Eagly & Chaiken, 1998) provide the following answer. We engage in the most effortful and systematic processing when our motivation and capacity to process information relating to the persuasive message is high. This type of processing occurs if we have a lot of knowledge about the topic, we have a lot of time to engage in careful thought, or the issue is sufficiently important to us and we believe it is essential to form an accurate view (Maheswaran & Chaiken, 1991; Petty & Cacioppo, 1990).

In contrast, we engage in the type of processing that requires less effort (heuristic processing) when we lack the ability or capacity to process more carefully (we must make up our minds very quickly or we have little knowledge about the issue) or when our motivation to perform such cognitive work is low (the issue is unimportant to us or has little potential effect on us). Advertisers, politicians, salespeople, and others wishing to change our attitudes prefer to push us into the heuristic mode of processing because, for reasons we describe later, it is often easier to change our attitudes when we think in this mode than when we engage in more careful and systematic processing.



5.1.3: Resisting Persuasion Attempts

- **Reactance:** Negative reactions to threats to one's personal freedom. Reactance often increases resistance to persuasion and can even produce negative attitude change or opposite to what was intended.
- **Forewarning:** Advance knowledge that one is about to become the target of an attempt at persuasion. Forewarning often increases resistance to the persuasion that follows.
- **Selective avoidance:** A tendency to direct attention away from information that challenges existing attitudes. Such avoidance increases resistance to persuasion.

5.2: COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

Cognitive dissonance can be defined as an internal state that results when individuals notice inconsistency between two or more attitudes or between their attitudes and their behavior.

5.2.1: Strategies for Resolving Cognitive Dissonance

- We can also reduce cognitive dissonance by acquiring new information (justifications) that supports our behavior.
- Another option for managing dissonance when inconsistency is salient involves deciding that the inconsistency actually doesn't matter! In other words, we can engage in trivialization—concluding that either the attitudes or behaviors in question are not important so any inconsistency between them is of no importance (Simon, Greenberg, & Brehm, 1995).
- Research by Steele and his colleagues (e.g., Steele, 1988; Steele & Lui, 1983) indicates that dissonance can be reduced via indirect means. That is, although the basic discrepancy between the attitude and behavior are left intact, the unpleasant or negative feelings generated by dissonance can still be reduced by.

CHAPTER 6

PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION

Prejudice: Negative emotional responses based on group membership.

Discrimination: Differential (usually negative) behaviors directed toward members of different social groups.

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

Gender stereotypes: Stereotypes concerning the traits possessed by females and males and that distinguish the two genders from each other.

Glass ceiling: Barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified females from advancing to top-level positions.

Glass cliff effect: Choosing women for leadership positions that are risky, precarious, or when the outcome is more likely to result in failure.

Tokenism: Tokenism can refer to hiring based on group membership. It can concern a numerically infrequent presence of members of a particular category or it can refer to instances where individuals perform trivial positive actions for members of out-groups that are later used as an excuse for refusing more meaningful beneficial actions for members of these groups.

Realistic conflict theory: The view that prejudice stems from direct competition between various social groups over scarce and valued resources.

Social identity theory: A theory concerned with the consequences of perceiving ourselves as a member of a social group and identifying with it.

CHAPTER 7

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Social influence: Efforts by one or more persons to change the behavior, attitudes, or feelings of one or more others.

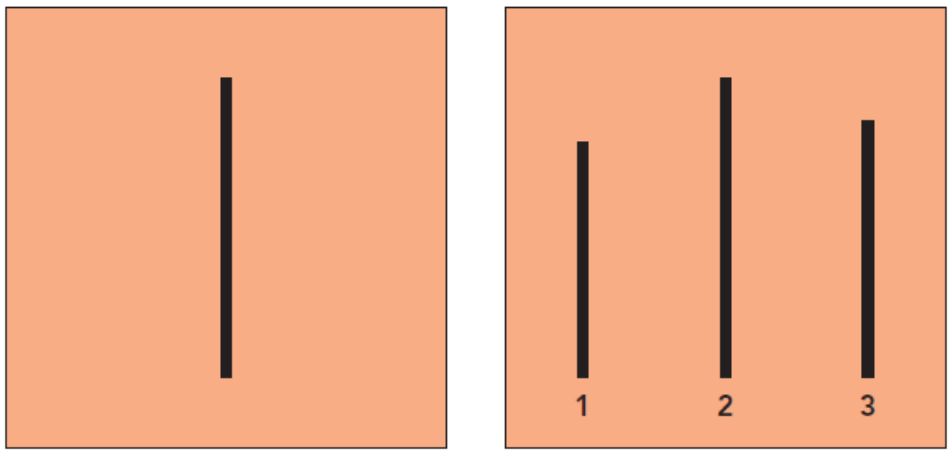
Conformity: A type of social influence in which individuals change their attitudes or behavior to adhere to existing social norms.

Compliance: A form of social influence involving direct requests from one person to another.

Obedience: A form of social influence in which one person simply orders one or more others to perform some action(s).

7.1: ASCH'S RESEARCH ON CONFORMITY

Important insights into our behavior were provided by studies conducted by Solomon Asch (1951, 1955). Asch created a compelling social dilemma for his participants whose task was ostensibly to simply respond to a series of perceptual problems. On each of the problems, participants were to indicate which of three comparison lines matched a standard line in length. Several other people (usually six to eight) were also present during the session, but unknown to the real participant, all were assistants of the experimenter. On certain occasions known as critical trials (12 out of the 18 problems) the accomplices offered answers that were clearly wrong; they unanimously chose the wrong line as a match for the standard line. Moreover, they stated their answers before the real participants responded. Thus, on these critical trials, the people in Asch's study faced precisely the type of dilemma described above. Should they go along with the other individuals present or stick to their own judgments? The judgments seemed to be very simple ones, so the fact that other people agreed on an answer different from the one the



participants preferred was truly puzzling. Results were clear: A large majority of the people in Asch's research chose conformity. Across several different studies, fully 76 percent of those tested went along with the group's false answers at least once; and overall, they voiced agreement with these errors 37 percent of the time. In contrast, only 5 percent of the participants in a control group, who responded to the same problems alone, made such errors.

Of course, there were large individual differences in this respect. Almost 25 percent of the participants never yielded to the group pressure. At the other extreme, some individuals went along with the majority nearly all the time. When Asch questioned them, some of these people stated: "I am wrong, they are right"; they had little confidence in their own judgments. Most, however, said they felt that the other people present were suffering from an optical illusion or were merely sheep following the responses of the first person. Yet, when it was their turn, these people, too, went along with the group. They knew that the others were wrong (or at least, probably wrong), but they couldn't bring themselves to disagree with them.

7.2: COMPLIANCE

Compliance is a form of social influence involving direct requests from one person to another.

7.2.1: Principles of Compliance

Accordioning to Cialdini (1994, 2008), there are six basic principles of compliance.

- **Friendship/liking:** In general, we are more willing to comply with requests from friends or from people we like than with requests from strangers or people we don't like.
- **Commitment/consistency:** Once we have committed ourselves to a position or action, we are more willing to comply with requests for behaviors that are consistent with this position or action than with requests that are inconsistent with it.
- **Scarcity:** In general, we value, and try to secure, outcomes or objects that are scarce or decreasing in availability. As a result, we are more likely to comply with requests that focus on scarcity than ones that make no reference to this issue.
- **Reciprocity:** We are generally more willing to comply with a request from someone who has previously provided a favor or concession to us than to someone who has not. In other words, we feel obligated to pay people back in some way for what they have done for us.

- **Social validation:** We are generally more willing to comply with a request for some action if this action is consistent with what we believe people similar to ourselves are doing (or thinking). We want to be correct, and one way to do so is to act and think like others.
- **Authority:** In general, we are more willing to comply with requests from someone who holds legitimate authority—or simply appears to do so.

7.2.2: Tactics based on Compliance

- **Foot-in-the-door technique:** A procedure for gaining compliance in which requesters begin with a small request and then, when this is granted, escalate to a larger one (the one they actually desired all along).
- **Low-ball procedure:** A technique for gaining compliance in which an offer or deal is changed to make it less attractive to the target person after this person has accepted it.
- **Door-in-the-face technique:** A procedure for gaining compliance in which requesters begin with a large request and then, when this is refused, retreat to a smaller one (the one they actually desired all along).
- **That's-not-all technique:** A technique for gaining compliance in which requesters offer additional benefits to target people before they have decided whether to comply with or reject specific requests.
- **Playing hard to get:** A technique that can be used for increasing compliance by suggesting that a person or object is scarce and hard to obtain.
- **Deadline technique:** A technique for increasing compliance in which target people are told that they have only limited time to take advantage of some offer or to obtain some item.

7.3: OBEDIENCE

Obedience is a form of social influence in which one person simply orders one or more others to perform some action(s).

7.3.1: Milgram's Experiment on Obedience

Stanley Milgram (1963, 1965, 1974) designed an ingenious, if unsettling, laboratory simulation. The experimenter informed participants in the study (all males) that they were taking part in an investigation of the effects of punishment on learning. One person in each pair of participants would serve as a "learner" and would try to perform a simple task involving

memory (supplying the second word in pairs of words they had previously memorized after hearing only the first word). The other participant, the "teacher," would read these words to the learner, and would punish errors by the learner (failures to provide the second word in each pair) through electric shock. These shocks would be delivered by means of the equipment which contained 30 numbered switches ranging from "15 volts" (the first) through 450 volts (the 30th). The two people present—a real participant and a research assistant—then drew slips of paper from a hat to determine who would play each role; as you can guess, the drawing was rigged so that the real participant always became the teacher. The teacher was then told to deliver a shock to the learner each time he made an error on the task. Moreover—and this is crucial—teachers were told to increase the strength of the shock each time the learner made an error. This meant that if the learner made many errors, he would soon be receiving strong jolts of electricity. It's important to note that this information was false: In reality, the assistant (the learner) never received any shocks during the experiment. The only real shock ever used was a mild pulse from button number three to convince participants that the equipment was real.

During the session, the learner (following prearranged instructions) made many errors. Thus, participants soon found themselves facing a dilemma: Should they continue punishing this person with what seemed to be increasingly painful shocks? Or should they refuse? If they hesitated, the experimenter pressured them to continue with a graded series "prods": "Please continue"; "The experiment requires that you continue"; "It is absolutely essential that you continue"; and "You have no other choice; you must go on."

Since participants were all volunteers and were paid in advance, you might predict that most would quickly refuse the experimenter's orders. In reality, though, fully 65 percent showed total obedience—they proceeded through the entire series to the final 450-volt level. Many participants, of course, protested and asked that the session be ended. When ordered to proceed, however, a majority yielded to the experimenter's influence and continued to obey. Indeed, they continued doing so even when the victim pounded on the wall as if in protest over the painful shocks (at the 300-volt level), and then no longer responded, as if he had passed out. The experimenter told participants to treat failures to answer as errors; so from this point on, many participants believed that they were delivering dangerous shocks to someone who might already be unconscious!

Psychologists and the public both found Milgram's results highly disturbing. His studies seemed to suggest that ordinary people are willing, although with some reluctance, to

harm an innocent stranger if ordered to do so by someone in authority—in a sense, echoing the theme stated by Zimbardo in his famous "Stanford Prison Study" and more recent writings (Zimbardo, 2007).

CHAPTER 8

PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

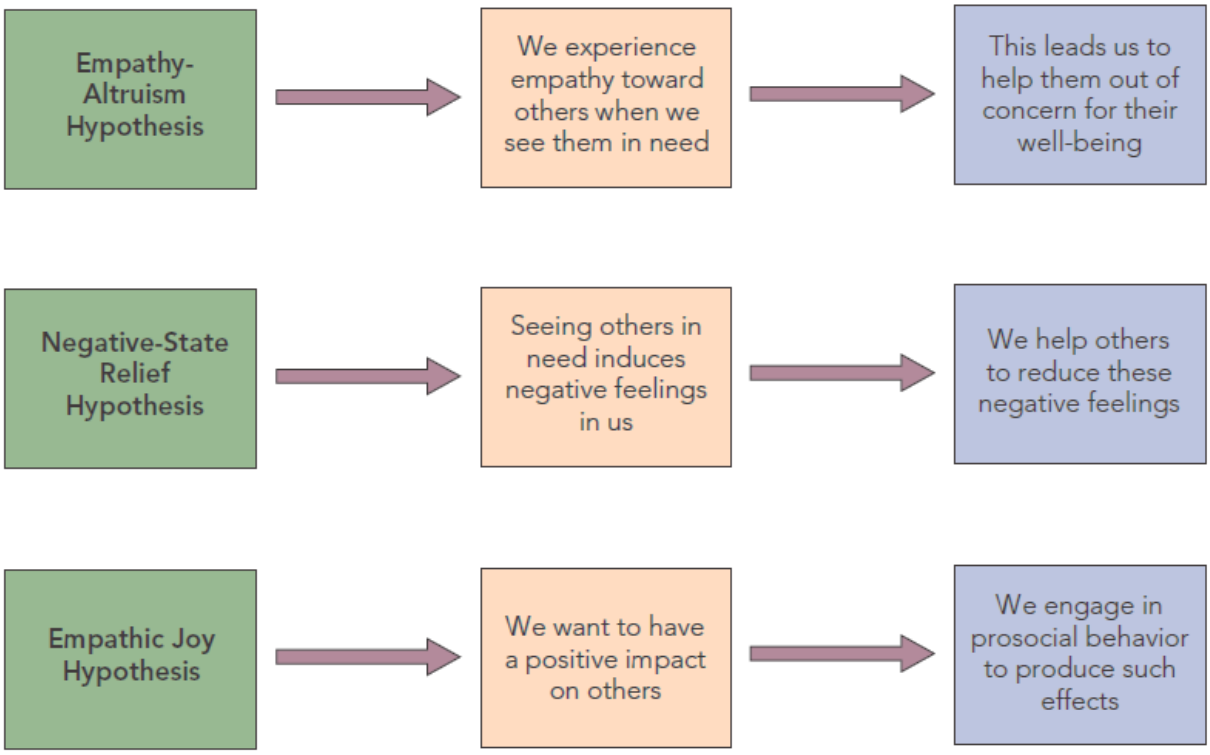
Prosocial behavior can be defined as the actions by individuals that help others with no immediate benefit to the helper.

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

Empathy-altruism hypothesis: The suggestion that some prosocial acts are motivated solely by the desire to help someone in need.

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

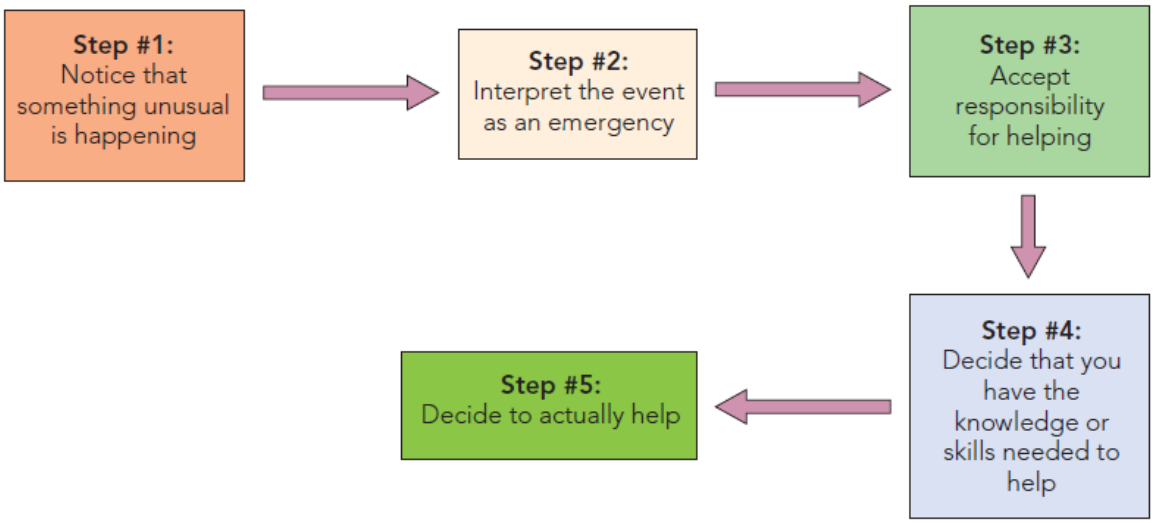
Empathic joy hypothesis: The view that helpers respond to the needs of a victim because they want to accomplish something, and doing so is rewarding in and of itself.



Diffusion of responsibility: A principle suggesting that the greater the number of witnesses to an emergency the less likely victims are to receive help. This is because each bystander assumes that someone else will do it.

Bystander effect: Refers to the fact that because none of the bystanders respond to an emergency, no one knows for sure what is happening and each depends on the others to interpret the situation.

8.1: FIVE STEPS TO ENGAGE IN PROSCIAL BEHAVIOUR



CHAPTER 9

AGGRESSION

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

In the past, aggression involved face-to-face assaults against others, (either verbal or physical) or indirect efforts to harm them through such tactics as spreading malicious rumors about them. But now, there are many new—and deadly—ways to harm others. Sexting can be one of them, but so, too, can using the Web to spread embarrassing photos with other kinds of content and "smear campaigns," designed to harm the targets' reputations.

9.1: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Theoretical perspectives on aggression explain the nature, process and determinants of aggression based on different psychological approaches.

9.1.1: The Role of Biological factors

The oldest and probably most famous explanation is the view that human beings are "programmed" for violence by their basic nature. The most famous supporter of this theory was Sigmund Freud, who believed that aggression stems mainly from a powerful death wish (thanatos) we all possess. According to Freud, this instinct is initially aimed at self-destruction, but is soon redirected outward, toward others.

A related view was proposed by Konrad Lorenz, who suggested that aggression springs mainly from an inherited fighting instinct, which ensures that only the strongest males will obtain mates and pass their genes on to the next generation.

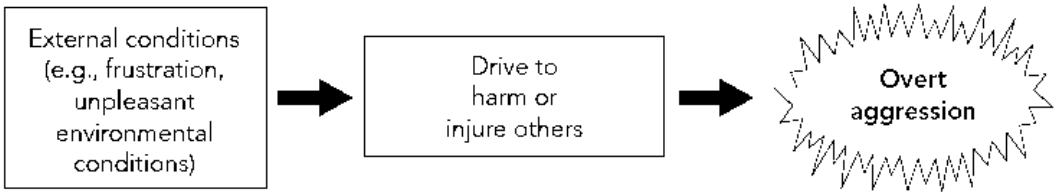
Most of the social psychologists continue to reject the view that human aggression stems largely from innate (i.e., genetic) factors, some now accept the possibility that genetic factors may indeed play some role in human aggression.

9.1.1.1: Major Criticisms

- Human beings aggress against others in many different ways, from ignorance to violent acts. This huge range of behavior can't be determined by genetic factors.
- The frequency of aggressive actions varies tremendously across human societies. This huge difference weakens the genetic deterministic view of aggression.

9.1.2: Drive Theories of Aggression

Theories suggesting that aggression stems from external conditions that arouse the motive to harm or injure others. These theories propose that external conditions—especially frustration— arouse a strong motive to harm others. This aggressive drive, in turn, leads to overt acts of aggression.



9.1.2.1: Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis

The most famous of these theories is the well-known frustration- aggression hypothesis (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowerer, & Sears, 1939). Frustration- aggression hypothesis is nothing but the **suggestion that frustration is a powerful determinant of aggression**. This theory suggests that frustration (**anything that prevents us from reaching goals we are seeking**) leads to the arousal of a drive whose primary goal is that of harming some person or object primarily the perceived cause of aggression.

This hypothesis made two assertions;

- Frustration **always** leads to some form of aggression.
- Aggression **always** stems from frustration.

Social psychologists now realize that this theory is somewhat misleading.

9.1.3: Modern Theories of Aggression

Unlike earlier views, modern theories of aggression do not focus on a single factor (instincts, drives, frustration) as the primary cause of aggression. Rather, they draw on advances in many areas of psychology in order to gain added insight into the factors that play a role in the occurrence of such behavior. There are two theories come under the classification of modern theories of aggression.

- Social learning perspective (Bandura, 1997)
- General aggression model (GAM) (Anderson & Bushman, 2002)

9.1.3.1: Social Learning Perspective

This theory begins with a very reasonable idea: Human beings are not born with a large array of aggressive responses at their disposal. Rather, they must acquire these in the much the

same way that they acquire other complex forms of social behavior: through direct experience or by observing the behavior of others (i.e., social models—live people or characters on television, in movies, or even in video games who behave aggressively).

Thus, depending on their past experience and the cultures in which they live, individuals learn,

- Various ways of seeking to harm others.
- Which people or groups are appropriate targets for aggression.
- What actions by others justify retaliation or vengeance on their part.
- What situations or contexts are ones in which aggression is permitted or even approved.

In short, the social learning perspective suggests that whether a specific person will aggress in a given situation depends on many factors, including the person's past experience, the current rewards associated with past or present aggression, and attitudes and values that shape this person's thoughts concerning the appropriateness and potential effects of such behavior.

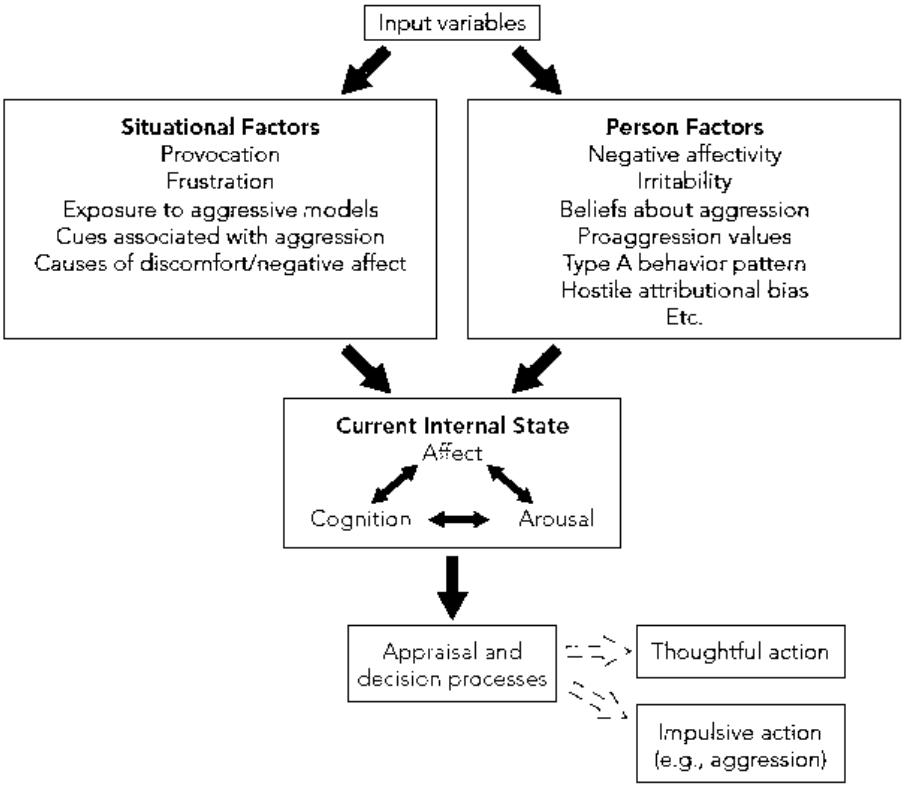
9.1.3.2: General aggression model

A modern theory of aggression suggesting that aggression is triggered by a wide range of input variables that influence arousal, affective stages, and cognitions.

General aggression model (GAM) (Anderson & Bushman, 2002), provides an even more complete account of the foundations of human aggression. According to this theory, a chain of events that may ultimately lead to overt aggression can be initiated by two major types of input variables:**(1) factors relating to the current situation (situational factors) and (2) factors relating to the people involved (person factors).** Variables falling into the first category include frustration, some kind of provocation from another person (e.g., an insult), exposure to other people behaving aggressively (aggressive models, real or in the media), and virtually anything that causes individuals to experience discomfort—everything from uncomfortably high temperatures to a dentist's drill or even an extremely dull lecture. Variables in the second category (individual differences across people) include traits that predispose some individuals toward aggression (e.g., high irritability), certain attitudes and beliefs about violence (e.g., believing that it is acceptable and appropriate), a tendency to perceive hostile intentions in others' behavior, and specific skills related to aggression (e.g., knowing how to fight or how to use various weapons).

According to the general aggression model (GAM), these situational and individual (personal) variables lead to overt aggression through their impact on three basic processes: arousal—they may increase physiological arousal or excitement; affective states—they can

arouse hostile feelings and outward signs of these (e.g., angry facial expressions); and cognitions—they can induce individuals to think hostile thoughts or canbring beliefs and attitudes about aggression to mind. Depending on individuals' interpretations (appraisals) of the current situation and restraining factors (e.g., the presence of police or the threatening nature of the intended target person), they then engage either in thoughtful action, which might involve restraining their anger, or impulsive action, which can lead to overt aggressive actions.



9.2: DETERMINANTS OF AGGRESSION

Research by social psychologists has shown that all of these factors—and many others, too—can play a role. In other words, aggression doesn't stem from one primary factor or just a few; rather, as modern theories of aggression suggest it is influenced by a wide range of social, personal, and situational conditions.

9.2.1: Social Determinants of Aggression

Aggression, like other forms of social behavior, is often a response to something in the social world around us. In other words, it often occurs in response to something other people have

said or done. Research findings reveal that **frustration, provocation and heightened arousal** are the primary social determinants of aggression.

9.2.1:1:Frustration

Frustration- aggression hypothesis suggests that frustrated people always engage in some type of aggression and that all acts of aggression, in turn, result from frustration.

Existing evidence suggests that both portions of the frustration-aggression hypothesis assign far too much importance to frustration as a determinant of human aggression. When frustrated, individuals do not always respond with aggression. On the contrary, they show many different reactions, ranging from sadness, despair, and depression on the one hand, to direct attempts to overcome the source of their frustration on the other. In short, aggression is definitely not an automatic response to frustration.

Second, it is equally clear that not all aggression stems from frustration. People aggress for many different reasons and in response to many different factors.

In view of these basic facts, most social psychologists now believe that it is simply one of many factors that can potentially lead to aggression.

9.2.1.2: Provocation

Actions by others that tend to trigger aggression in the recipient, often because they are perceived as stemming from malicious intent.

Research findings indicate that physical or verbal provocation from others is one of the strongest causes of human aggression.Existing evidence suggests that **condescension (expressions of arrogance or disdain on the part of others)** is very powerful (Harris, 1993). Harsh and unjustified criticism, especially criticism that attacks us rather than our behavior, is another powerful form of provocation, and when exposed to it, most people find it very difficult to avoid getting angry and retaliating in some manner.

Another form of provocation to which many people respond with annoyance is **teasing (provoking statements that call attention to an individual's flaws and imperfections, but can be, at the same time, somewhat playful in nature)**. Teasing can range from mild, humorous remarks through nicknames or comments that truly seem designed to hurt. Research findings indicate that the more individuals attribute teasing to hostile motivesthe more likely they are to respond aggressively.

9.2.1.3: Heightened Arousal

Excitation transfer theory: - A theory suggesting that arousal produced in one situation can persist and intensify emotional reactions occurring in later situations.

This theory suggests that because physiological arousal tends to dissipate slowly over time, a portion of such arousal may persist as a person moves from one situation to another and that make the person aggressive even in the exposure to relatively minor annoyance.

Excitation theory further suggests that such effects are most likely to occur when the people involved are relatively unaware of the presence of residual arousal.

Excitation transfer theory also suggests that sucheffects are likely to occur when the people involved recognizetheir residual arousal but attribute it to events occurringin the present situation.

9.2.2: Personal determinants of Aggression

Sometimes individual's personal factors strongly influence their aggressive behavior. **Type A behavior, Sensation seeking personality, Narcissism, Gender difference** are some of the personal determinants of aggression.

2.2.1: Type 'A' Behaviour Pattern

A pattern consisting primarily of high levels of competitiveness, time urgency and hostility.

Persons having type A behavior pattern are more aggressive as compared to type Bs in many situations. Additional findings indicate that Type As are truly hostile people; they don't merely aggress against others because this is a useful means for reaching other goals. Rather, they are more likely than Type Bs to engage in **hostile aggression** (aggression in which the prime objective is inflicting some kind of harm on the victim). And also Type As are more likely than Type Bs to engage in such actions as child abuse or spousal abuse. (Strube, Turner, Cerro, Stevens, & Hinchey, 1984). In contrast, Type Bs are more likely than Type As to engage in **instrumental aggression** (aggression in which the primary goal is not to harm the victim but rather attainment of some other goal—for example, access to valued resources).

9.2.2.2: Sensation Seeking Personality

There are ground for expecting sensation seeking persons to be higher than others in aggression. GAM suggests some possible reasons for this.

1. It may be that persons high in sensation seeking experience anger and hostile feelings more often than do others.

2. Their emotions are easily aroused. So they may have lower thresholds for becoming angry.
3. Their tendencies to get bored and to seek exciting new experiences may lead them to have more hostile thoughts.
4. Aggressive exchanges with others are exciting and dangerous.
5. They are more likely to focus on the immediate rather than delayed consequences of their behavior.

9.2.2.3: Narcissism

Research findings indicate that people high in narcissism (ones who agree with items such as "If I ruled the world it would be a much better place" and "I am more capable than other people") react with exceptionally high levels of aggression when their egos are threatened.

Narcissistic people may react strongly to even mild provocations because they believe that they are so much better than other people, and as a result, perceive even very mild critical comments from others as strong slurs on their inflated self-image.

9.2.2.4: Gender Difference

Gender differences in aggression are much larger in the absence of provocation than in its presence. In other words, males are significantly more likely than females to aggress against others when they have not been provoked in any manner. **In situations where provocation is present, and especially when it is intense, such differences tend to disappear**.

Research findings indicate that men are more likely than women to engage in various forms of **direct aggression** (Actions aimed directly at the target that clearly stem from the aggressor. e.g., physical assaults, pushing, shoving, throwing something at another person, shouting etc). However females are more likely to engage in various forms of **indirect aggression** (acrions that allow the aggressor to conceal his or her identity from the victim, and that make it difficult for the victim to know that they have been the target of intentional harm doing like spreading rumors about the target persons, making up stories to get the person in trouble, etc)

9.2.3: Situational determinants of Aggression

Aggression is also affected by factors relating to the situation or context in which it occurs. **Uncomfortably high temperatures** and **alcohol** are two of the many situational factors that can influence aggression.

9.2.3.1: Temperature and Aggression

Research on the effects of heat on aggression suggests that there is indeed a link between heat and aggression: When people get hot, they become irritable and may be more likely to lash out at others, especially when they have been provoked in some way. However there may be limits to this relationship. After prolonged exposure to high temperatures, people become so uncomfortable that they are lethargic and focus on reducing their discomfort, not on attacking others.

9.2.3.2: Alcohol and Aggression

It is widely assumed that people become more aggressive when they consume alcohol. Recent findings suggest that the effects of alcohol on aggression may stem, at least in part, from reduced cognitive functioning and what this does, in turn, to social perception. Specifically, the findings of several studies indicate that alcohol impairs higher-order cognitive functions such as evaluation of stimuli and memory. This may make it harder for individuals to evaluate others' intentions (hostile or non hostile) and to evaluate the effects that various forms of behavior on their part, including aggression, may produce. For instance, people who have consumed alcohol show reductions in their capacity to process positive information about someone they initially dislike. This means that if such a person provoked them, but then apologized, those who have consumed alcohol might be less able to process this information carefully, and so would remain likely to aggress, despite the apology.

9.3. MEDIA VIOLENCE AND ITS EFFECT

Media violence: Depictions of violent actions in the mass media.

Social psychology's leading experts on the effects of media violence agree that the effects of media violence are real, lasting, and substantial—effects with important implications for society and for the safety and well-being of millions of people who are the victims of aggressive actions each year.

9.3.1: Causes of Media Violence

According to Bushman and Anderson (2002), the effects of media violence can be readily understood within the context of the general aggression model (GAM). This model suggests that both personal and situational factors influence individuals' internal states—their feelings, thoughts, and arousal—and that these internal states, in turn, shape individuals' appraisal of a given situation and their decision as to how to behave in it—aggressively or non aggressively. Bushman and Anderson suggest that repeated exposure to media violence can

strongly affect cognitions relating to aggression, gradually creating a hostile expectation bias—a strong expectation that others will behave aggressively. This, in turn, causes individuals to be more aggressive themselves; after all, they perceive provocations from others everywhere, even when they really don't exist! Studies designed to test this reasoning.

9.3.2: Effects of Media Violence

As a result of exposure to violence in films, television, or video games increases the tendency to aggress against others in several ways. First, as we just saw, **it reduces individuals' emotional reactions to such events** so that, in a sense, they perceive them as "nothing out of the ordinary." Second, **it strengthens beliefs, expectations, and other cognitive processes related to aggression**. In other words, as a result of repeated exposure to violent movies, TV programs, or video games, individuals develop strong knowledge structures relating to aggression—structures reflecting, and combining, these beliefs, expectations, schemas, and scripts. When these knowledge structures are then activated by various events, people feel, think, and act aggressively because this is what, in a sense, they have learned to do.

CHAPTER 10

GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

Group can be defined as the collection of people who are perceived to be bonded together in a coherent unit to some degree.

Collectivism: Groups in which the norm is to maintain harmony among group members, even if doing so might entail some personal costs.

Individualism: Groups where the norm is to stand out and be different from others; individual variability is expected and disagreement among members is tolerated.

Cohesiveness: All forces (factors) that cause group members to remain in the group.

10.1: NATURE AND EFFECTS OF CROWDING

The fact that our behavior is often strongly affected by the groups to which we belong is far from surprising; after all, in these groups there are usually well-established norms that tell us how we are expected to behave. Perhaps much more surprising is the fact that often we are strongly affected by the mere presence of others, even if we, and they, are not part of a formal group.

Mainly there are three phenomena which describe about the effect of crowding namely; **social facilitation, social loafing and deindividuation.**

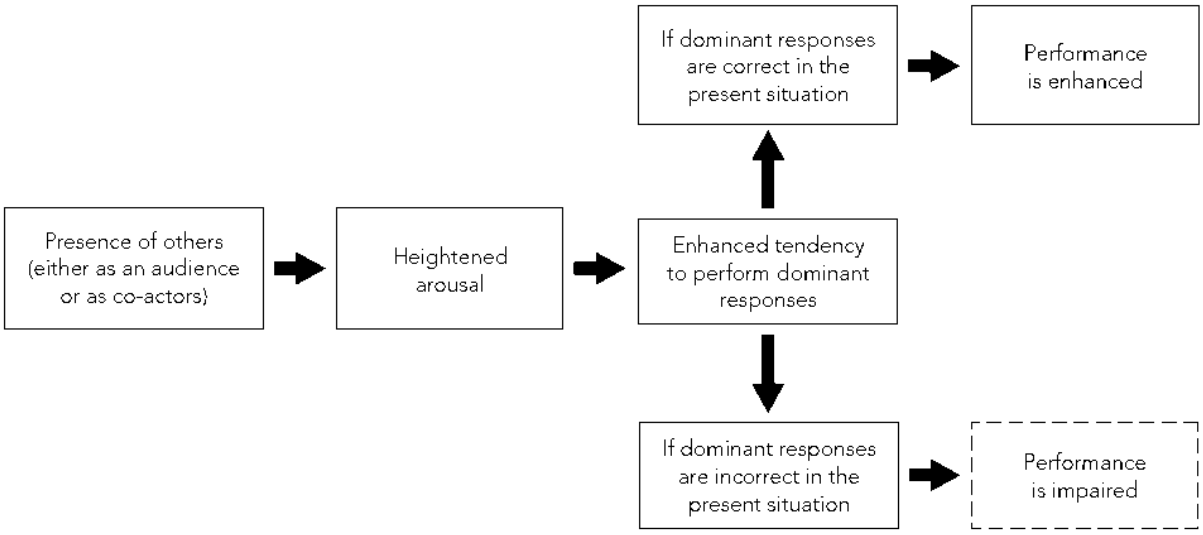
10.1.1: Social Facilitation

Effect upon performance resulting from the presence of others.

Early researches in social facilitation suggested that performance was better when people worked in the presence of others than when they worked alone (Allport, 1920). On the basis of such findings Allport and other researchers referred to the effects on performance of the presence of other persons as social facilitation, because, it appeared that when others were present, performance was enhanced. But other research soon reported exactly opposite results; performance was worse in the presence of an audience or the other people performing the same task than it was when individuals performed alone (Pessin, 1933). Robert Zajonc forwarded one explanation for this contradiction.

10.1.1.1: Zajonc's Drive Theory of Social Facilitation

Zajonc (1965) argued that the mere presence of others would only facilitate a well learned response, but that it could inhibit a less-practiced or "new" response. He noted that the presence of others increases physiological arousal (our bodies become more energized) and, as a result, any dominant response will be facilitated. This means that we can focus better on something we know or have practiced when we're aroused, but that same physiological arousal will create problems when we're dealing with something new or complex. **This view is known as the drive theory of social facilitation because it focuses on arousal or drive-based effects on performance**.



The presence of others will improve individuals' performance when they are highly skilled at the task in question, but will interfere with performance when they are not highly skilled—for instance, when they are learning to perform it (for their dominant responses would not be correct in that case).

However, other researchers thought that performance might sometimes be disrupted by the presence of an audience because of apprehension about having their performance evaluated. This **evaluation apprehension (Concern over being evaluated by others.** Such concern can increase arousal and so contribute to social facilitation**)** idea was studied by Cottrell, Wack, Sekerak, and Rittle (1968). In fact, several of their experiments found that social facilitation did not occur when an audience was blindfolded, or displayed no interest in watching the person performing the task, which lent support to the interpretation that concerns about evaluation, might play a role.

10.1.1.2: Distraction - Conflct Theory

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

Some have suggested that the presence of others, either as an audience or as co-actors, can be distracting and, for this reason, it can produce cognitive overload (e.g., Baron, 1986). Because performers must divide their attention between the task and the audience, such increased cognitive load can result in a tendency to restrict one's attention so as to focus only on essential cues or stimuli while "screening out" nonessential ones.

Research findings have confirmed that social facilitation stems from cognitive factors and not just heightened arousal, as Zajonc proposed. the presence of others generate increased arousal, but it may do so because of the cognitive demands of paying attention both to an audience and to the task being performed rather than as a result of their mere physical presence. One advantage of this cognitive perspective is that it helps explain when people are affected by the presence of an audience that differs in how distracting it is to the performer.

10.1.2: Social Loafing

Reductions in motivation and effort when individuals work in a group compared to when they work individually.

Tasks for which the group product is the sum or combination of the efforts of individual members is known as **additive tasks.** In additive tasks, some people will work hard, while others goof off and do less than they would if working alone. Social psychologists refer to such effects as **social loafing** (Karau & Williams, 1993).

effect of social loafing appear among both genders and among children as well as adults, although this tendency may be slightly stronger in men than in women (Karau & Williams, 1993). In fact there appear to be two exception to the generality of social loafing.

- Women may be slightly less likely to show this effect than men (Karau & Williams, 1993), perhaps because they tend to be higher than men in concern for other's welfare.
- Social loafing effects don't seem to occur in collectivistic cultures. In fact, in such cultures, people seem to work harder when in groups than they do when alone.

10.1.2.1: Reducing Social Loafing; Some Useful Techniques

- The most obvious way of reducing social loafing involves making the output or effort of each participant readily identifiable (Williams, Harkins, & Latané, 1981). Under

these conditions, people can't sit back and let others do their work, so social loafing is reduced. When people believe their contribution matters, and a strong performance on the part of the group will lead to a desired outcome, individuals also tend to try harder (Shepperd & Taylor, 1999).

- Groups can reduce social loafing by increasing group members' commitment to successful task performance (Brickner, Harkins, & Ostrom, 1986). Pressures toward working hard will then serve to offset temptations to engage in social loafing.
- Social loafing can be reduced by increasing the apparent importance or value of a task (Karau & Williams, 1993).
- People are less likely to loaf if they are given some kind of standard of performance—either in terms of how much others are doing or their own past performance (Williams et al., 1981).

10.1.3: Deindividuation

A psychological state characterized by reduced self-awareness brought on by external conditions, such as being an anonymous member of a large crowd.

When people are in a large crowd they tend "to lose their individuality" and instead act as others do. More formally, the term deindividuation was used to indicate a psychological state characterized by reduced self-awareness and personal identity salience, brought on by external conditions such as being an anonymous member of a large crowd.

Initial research on deindividuation (Zimbardo, 1970) seemed to suggest that being in a crowd makes people anonymous and therefore less responsible or accountable for their own actions, which encourages unrestrained, antisocial actions. When we are part of a large crowd we are more likely to obey the norms of this group—whatever those may be (Postmes & Spears, 1998). Overall, then, being part of a large crowd and experiencing deindividuation does not necessarily lead to negative or harmful behaviors; it simply increases the likelihood that crowd members will follow the norms of the group.

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#Disclaimer: This note is prepared for learning the basics of Social Psychology and based on the PG entrance pattern only. It is not a complete collection of Social Psychology theory or principles.