

# Advanced Placement Psychology

## Chapter 18: Social Psychology

( <http://www.ApPsychology.net> )

- The goal of **social psychologists** is to study how we feel about, relate, and influence each other

### Social Thinking

- Fritz Heider's **Attribution Theory** states that people "attribute" (link) others' behaviors with their (internal) *disposition* or (external) *situations*. I.e. A person that always smiles at a party might give the impression to others that he is a happy guy (dispositional attribution) or the party is making him happy (situational attribution).
- **Fundamental Attribution Error** – When someone attributes others' behavior as a reflection of their "real" internal disposition not considering situational effects. That is, one makes the mistake of *underestimating situational influence* and *overestimating personality influence*. I.e. Observing a police officer at work will make you think that they are forceful, non-tolerating, and even aggressive (overestimating personality influence) but this is so because their job demands such actions (underestimating situation influence). However, catch them off duty in a pet shop and you might see how caring and sincere they are.
- **Attitudes** – Your feelings and beliefs that direct the way you respond to your surroundings. In turn, your actions can also dictate your attitudes; so attitudes and actions exist in an enduring cycle.
- **Foot-in-the-door-phenomenon** – Tendency for people who have agreed on a small request to comply later to a larger one. I.e. you are likely to agree to a small questionnaire from a salesman at first and then also to agree to larger request say purchasing what he has to offer.
- **Role** – Expectations on how one should behave in a certain social position. I.e. Adults should be responsible, professors should be intellectual, soldiers should be brave...etc.
- In Philip Zimbardo's 1972 prison study, students were randomly assigned to act as prisoners or guards. In less than a week, the students became so absorbed into their "role playing" that the roles they played actually became themselves. The guards adopted abusive attitudes and the prisoners became discouraged and even rebellious. After the study, the students quickly grew back into their normal roles.
- **Cognitive Dissonance Theory** – States that if what we believe and what we do are inconsistent, we will feel *cognitive dissonance* (discomforting tension) and we will reduce this tension by altering our attitudes. I.e. If you were made to write about the advantages of a topic you disagree on (say more homework), you'll feel uneasy and start believing your words to comfort yourself.

### Social Influence

- **Conformity** – often due to group pressure, is the adjustment of your behavior or thinking to coincide with others. Examples of conformity include: laughing when others are laughing, going to a stand in the mall crowded with people, giving more to charity baskets because there's lots of money inside.
  - **Norms** – Expected or proper behavior in a social context.
  - **Normative Social Influence** – Person conforms because they want to gain social approval/acceptance. (**NORM**ative – following the social norm)
  - **Informative Social Influence** – Person conforms because they accept others' judgment on reality. (**INF**ormative –accepting info/facts about reality)
  - **Stanley Milgrim's Obedience Study** – Participants act as teachers who deliver electrical shocks to examinee's that answer incorrectly. The magnitude of voltages increase as the number of questions answered incorrectly increase. Even though screaming sounds of pain were heard from the examinee, 63% of the participants delivered right up to the last 450-volts. The experiment showed that obedience was highest when: the order giver has high authority, the victim was far away or unseen, no one was seen disobeying.
- **Social Facilitation** – Improved performance on well learned tasks in the presence of others (audience).
- **Social Loafing** – Diminished effort when working in a group towards a common goal. (slacking off others)
- **Deindividuation** – The loss of self-restraint when one is part of a large group.

- **Group Polarization** – Pre-existing attitudes become enhanced when discussed with in a group. I.e. When abusive parents talk together, they feel their actions are more justified and become even more abusive.
- **Group Think** – Where people in group discussions tend to agree with whatever is being proposed in order to maintain harmony. Alternative views are suppressed even though they are better than the presented one.
- **Culture** – Passed on behaviors, ideas, and attitudes shared by a many people.
- *The minority can persuade the majority if they are consistent and committed. I.e. Mahatma Gandhi's fight for independence.*
- **Personal Space** – The “zone” we like to maintain around our bodies. This is culture-dependent. Western cultures have a relatively small personal space because of the hugs and kisses. Eastern cultures, however, like to maintain a relatively open personal space.
- **Gender Roles** – Expected behaviors from males and females in a culture.

## Social Relations

- **Prejudice** – Often negative beliefs, emotions, and actions towards a group and its individual members. These attitudes are based on **Stereotypes** – overgeneralizations about a group of people. These unjustified thoughts bring about discrimination and social inequalities. I.e. Negro's are perceived as violent as they push people the same way a Caucasian would.
- **Ingroup Bias** – Favoring of your own group. This kind of thinking promotes separations among the human race as people are classified as “ingroup” and “outgroup.”
- **Scapegoat Theory** – Justification of one's prejudice/anger is sought in blaming someone (target). In order to boost one's self-esteem they will resort to degrading others.
- **Just-world phenomenon** – Belief that the world is “just the way it is.” I.e. people get what they deserve and deserve what they get (promotes blame and lowers the tendency to help others).
- **Aggression** – Physical or verbal behavior intended to hurt or destroy others. People who are aggression-prone are more likely to drink and become violent.
- **Frustration-aggression principle** – Frustration creates Aggression.
- Repeated exposure to violent shows diminishes ones self-inhibition just as watching pornography makes one's partner seem less attractive.
- **Conflict** – Inconsistencies of actions, goals, and/or ideas.
- **Social Traps** – A situation in which both parties are aiming for self-interest only and therefore gets tied in a mutually destructive situation. I.e. When fishing companies anticipate that other companies will fish just as much or more as themselves so they continue to rigorously fish. Eventually this situation results in a depletion of fish because none of the companies would lower their fishing amount.
- **Mere-exposure effect** – Increased liking of a stimulus due to repeated exposure to it. I.e. The more you look at a picture the more you like it.
- You will become friends with those geographically close to you (proximity). Also, you are likely to marry someone who has the same level of physical attractiveness as you.
- **Passionate Love** – Usually present at the beginning of a relationship, this is state of intense “HOT” intimate love.
- **Companionate Love** – The affectionate attachment that replaces passionate love and persists in marriage.
- **Equity** – The constant sharing between partners. You freely get what you freely give. Equity increases chances of sustained companionate love.
- **Self-disclosure** – Telling your most intimate aspects (fears, wishes, dreams) to another (Disclosing yourself).
- **Altruism** – Unselfishness, being nice, unconditional help to others. This positive social interaction dictates the very quality of a hero.
- **Bystander Effect** – Diminished possibility of giving aid when other bystanders are present. Or failure to take responsibility of the situation when others are around. In order for a bystander to give aid to someone in need, 3 steps must be achieved :
  1. [The incident is noticed](#)
  2. [The incident is acknowledged as an emergency](#)
  3. [Responsibility of the incident is achieved](#)
- **Social exchange theory** – (reciprocity norm) social interactions are regarded as an exchange process where the goal is to maximize benefits and minimize costs.
- **Superordinate Goals** – Common goals that overlook individual differences and acquired through total cooperation.
- **GRIT** – Graduated and Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension-Reduction. Strategy for reduction of international tensions through *win-win* attitudes and communication.

**Bibliography**

Myers, David G., Psychology Fifth Edition. Worth Publishers, Inc. New York, NY ©1998