Social Psychology
Social Cognition

Social Categorization and Stereotypes

Social Categorization

• Assignment of people into categories or groups
• Based on the characteristics the person has in common with other people or groups

Automatic Process

• Research has demonstrated that social categories (associated with a stimuli) can become activated automatically

Example

• Stimuli = nurse
• Automatic Activation = hospital, drugs, patients, etc.
Social Cognition

Social Categorization and Stereotypes

**Stereotype**
- When superficial ideas become attached to a category label
- Can be positive or negative

**Examples**

**Category:** Bay Area people  
**Superficial idea:** Are open minded

**Category:** Midwest people  
**Superficial idea:** Are all cow-tipping yokels

**How can stereotypes and social categorization interaction to produce discrimination?**
Implicit Biases

• Biases towards groups that people are unaware they have
• Negative associations that become primed (preconscious) with the social category

Evidence (Devine, 1989)

• When white individuals were primed with the social category of Black, they showed faster response times for assigning negative traits, and slower response times for assessing positive traits

• EXAMPLE of Implicit Bias tests!!!
Social Interactions

Prejudice and Discrimination

**Prejudice**
- When a person holds unsupported and often negative stereotyped attitudes about the members of a particular social group

**Discrimination**
- Treating a social group with less respect based on a prejudiced attitude

**Differentiation**
- *Prejudice* = the attitude
- *Discrimination* = the behavior
Who are targets?

* Any social group/category is susceptible to prejudice and discrimination
* Race/Ethnicity
* Gender
* Sexual Orientation
* Age
* Body type
* Socioeconomic status
* Where you live
Quick Write: What causes prejudice and discrimination?
### Prejudice & Discrimination: Theories

**In-Group/Out-Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Big Picture</th>
<th>In-groups</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• An individual’s view of society becomes organized around in-groups (“us”) and out-groups (“Them”)</td>
<td>• In-group members experience enhanced similarity, positive regard, and empathy to other in-group members</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In-groups garner favoritism</td>
<td>• Trust is extended more easily to in-group members</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Out-groups become more susceptible to stereotypes and prejudice, and thus discrimination</td>
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Reasons For Discrimination

1. **In-group favoritism:** Most subtle discrimination is characterized by the absence of positive sentiments, not the presence of strong negative attitudes toward out-group members.

2. **Out-group degradation:**
   - More likely to occur with strong emotional arousal (fear, disgust, hatred)

Emotional Arousal

**Condition A:** when an out-group member violates an in-group norm
**Emotion:** disgust/avoidance

**Condition B:** when an out-group is believed to unjustly benefit from a social program
**Emotion:** Resentment

**Condition C:** out-group is seen as threatening
**Emotion:** Fear/anger
Prejudice & Discrimination: Theories

Social Identity Theory

**Big Picture**
- In-groups are given elevated status compared to out-groups to satisfy self-esteem needs

**Self-Esteem Hypothesis**
- In-group biases enhance self-esteem
- Depressed or threatened self-esteem motivates in-group biases

**Social Comparison**
- Comparing oneself to another person (out-group member) to enhance one’s self-esteem

**Reason For Discrimination**
- The need to maintain a positive self-esteem (through the process of a downward comparison of an out-group member) engenders negative stereotypes and prejudice → discrimination
**Prejudice & Discrimination: Theories**

**Subjective Uncertainty Reduction Theory**

**Big Picture**
- People have a fundamental need to feel certain about their world and their place within it (subjective certainty)
- Subjective certainty renders existence meaningful and gives one confidence for how to behave
- Uncertainty (about your place in the world) is aversive and unpleasant

**How It Works**
- Social groups often share attitudes, beliefs, and feelings and provide prescriptions for normative behavior

**How It Works**
- Identifying with a group provides certainty about attitudes, feelings, and behaviors (because you are sharing them with a large number of other individuals)

**Reason For Discrimination**
- Individuals view incongruent behaviors/attitudes of an out-group as a threat to their self-concept/sense of certainty → prejudice → discrimination
Mere Exposure Effect

**Definition**
- The phenomenon whereby the more often people are exposed to a stimulus, the more positively they evaluate that stimulus

**Research Moreland & Beach (1992)**
- Four women were selected who looked like “typical students”
- All women had a picture of their faces taken

**Levels Of Exposure**
- To determine if increased exposure leads to higher levels of attraction each of the women attended a class a different number of times: 0, 5, 10, 15

**Dependent Variable**
- Students in the class then looked at the pictures of each of the women and rated the women on various traits
  - Popularity
  - Honesty
  - Intelligence
  - Physical Attractiveness

**Results**
- The more classes a woman attended the more students were attracted to her
Romantic Relationships

Social Exchange Theory

**Big Picture**
- People are motivated to maximize benefits and minimize costs in their relationships with others
- Relationships that provide more rewards will be more enduring

**Rewards:** love, companionship, sexual gratification, etc.

**Costs:** Conflict, compromise, sacrifice of opportunities elsewhere

**Elements**

1. **Comparison Level (CL)** – a person’s average expected outcome in a relationship
   - *High expectations/low expectations*

2. **Comparison Level for Alternatives (CLalt)** – people’s expectations for what they could receive in alternative situations
   - *High rewards elsewhere – a person will be less committed*
Elements

3. **Investment** – time and energy a person puts into a relationship that he or she cannot recover if the relationship ends

* Higher investment = more commitment

**How It All Works**

• People perform calculations (often subconsciously) based on a combination of the elements to decide if they want to stay committed or not
Romantic Relationships

Stimulus-Value-Role (SVR) Theory

**Big Picture**

- Relationships are based on an equal exchange and at the beginning they move through three stages of development.
Romantic Relationships

Stimulus-Value-Role (SVR) Theory

1. Stimulus
   - Evaluating the partners’ stimulus qualities (physical attractiveness, voice, dress, reputation, social standing)
   - If both people are satisfied with the exchange, the relationship proceeds

2. Value
   - Following the stimulus stage, basic values are revealed (political beliefs, religion, morals, etc.)
   - Couples that are compatible move onto the next stage

3. Role
   - This stage is concerned with how a couple functions and the roles each person assumes
   - Stay home parent, house keeper, Controls money, sexual compatibility, etc.
What do you think?

• What are the strengths of the theory?
• What are the weaknesses?
• As a science, do you believe psychology, using its methodologies of observation, measurement, and control can formulate an accurate theory of romantic relationships?
Two-Stage Model of Attraction

**Big Picture**
- We are attracted to individuals who are similar to us (share the same attitudes, values, beliefs)
- We are repulsed by individuals who are dissimilar
Romanic Relationships

Two-Stage Model of Attraction

People you meet → Dissimilar → Avoidance

Not Dissimilar

Low Similarity → Indifferent

High Similarity → Attraction and continued contact