

# 10

## Social and Cultural Influences

### **SOCIAL PERCEPTION**

- Making Attributions
- Forming Impressions
- Attraction

### **SOCIAL INFLUENCE**

- Social Influence as “Automatic”
- Conformity
- Attitude Change
- Group Processes

### **SOCIAL RELATIONS**

- Aggression
- Altruism

### **CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES**

- Cultural Diversity: A Fact of Life

### **INTERGROUP DISCRIMINATION**

- Stereotypes
- Prejudice: The Motivational Roots
- Racism in America

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

**10.1** Identify how we can make errors in judgments about others, and reduce those incorrect judgments using psychological tools.

**10.2** Estimate which situations can have the greatest impact on behavioral change.

**10.3** Contrast variables that increase helping and aggressive behavior.

**10.4** Appraise the contribution culture makes to our perception of the world and others.

**10.5** Recognize the variables that contribute to prejudice and assess the role our brain plays in stereotype development.

## What’s Your Prediction: How Far Can People Be Pushed?

### The **SITUATION**

You read a newspaper ad for a psychology experiment that pays well, so you sign up. As you arrive at the laboratory, located at Yale University, you meet two men. One is the experimenter, a young man dressed in a white lab coat. The other is a pleasant middle-aged man named Mr. Wallace. After introductions, the experimenter explains that you will be taking part in a study on the effects of punishment on learning. By a drawing of lots, it is determined that you’ll serve as the “teacher” and Mr. Wallace as the “learner.” So far, so good.

Before you know it, however, the situation takes on a more ominous tone. You find out that your job is to test the learner’s memory and administer electric shocks of increasing intensity whenever he makes a mistake. While you are in another room, you watch the experimenter strap Mr. Wallace into a chair, roll up his sleeve, tape electrodes onto his arm, and apply “electrode paste” to prevent blisters and burns. You overhear Mr. Wallace say that he has a heart problem and the experimenter reply, “Although the shocks are painful, they will not cause permanent damage.” You then go back to the main room, where

you're seated in front of a shock generator—a machine with 30 switches that range from 15 volts (labeled “slight shock”) to 450 volts (labeled “XXX”).

Your task is easy. First, you read a list of word pairs to Mr. Wallace through a microphone. Blue—phone. Girl—hat. Fish—spoon. Then, you test his memory with a series of multiple-choice questions. If his answer is correct, you go to the next question. If it's incorrect, you announce the correct answer and shock him. As you press the shock switch, you can hear a buzzer go off in the learner's room. After each wrong answer, you're told to increase the shock intensity by 15 volts.

You don't realize it, but the experiment is rigged, and Mr. Wallace—who works for the experimenter—is not receiving any shocks. As the session proceeds, the learner makes more and more errors, leading you to work your way up the shock scale. As you reach 75 volts, you hear the learner grunt in pain. At 120 volts, he shouts. If you're still in it at 150 volts, he complains about his heart and cries out, “Experimenter! That's all. Get me out of here. I refuse to go on!” Screams of agony and protest follow. If you reach 300 volts, he absolutely refuses to go on. By the time you surpass 330 volts, the learner falls silent. 360 volts. Zap. Not a peep. 420, 435, 450. Zap. Still no response. At some point, you turn to the experimenter and ask, “What should I do? Shouldn't we check on him?” But in answer to your inquiries, the experimenter calmly repeats his commands: “Please continue.” “The experiment requires that you continue.” “You have no other choice. You must go on.”

### Make a PREDICTION

What do you do? Feeling caught between a rock and a hard place, do you follow your conscience or obey the experimenter? At what voltage do you stop? How would other participants react? Would anyone in their right mind keep shocking the hapless Mr. Wallace all the way to 450 volts? Based on what you know about people, try to predict the point at which most participants stopped and defied the experimenter. Make your prediction by circling a voltage level.

15	45	75	105	135	165	195	225
255	285	315	345	375	405	435	450

### The RESULTS

Forty years ago, social psychologist Stanley Milgram (1963) staged this situation to examine obedience to authority. When Milgram described the study to college students, adults, and a group of psychiatrists, they predicted that, on average, they would stop at 135 volts—and that almost nobody would go all the way. They were wrong. In Milgram's initial study, 26 out of 40 men (that's 65%) delivered the ultimate punishment of 450 volts.

### What Does It All MEAN?

Why did so many participants obey, even while thinking they were hurting a fellow human being? One possible explanation for these scary results is that Milgram's participants—all of whom were male—were unusually cruel and sadistic. Who were these guys? Or maybe the result says something about men in general. What if the participants were women instead? How far up the shock scale would they go? In a

follow-up study, Milgram examined this question by putting 40 women in the same situation. The result: 65% of the women tested administered 450 volts, identical to the number of men.

Perhaps people in general will harm a fellow human being. As a sad commentary on human nature, perhaps Milgram's study says more about aggression than obedience. But how far would participants go if not ordered to do so? What if the experimenter did not constantly prod the participants to raise the voltage level? In this situation, Milgram found that only 1 participant out of 40 (2.5%) pressed the last switch. Most stopped at 75 volts.

Milgram's participants had acted out of obedience, not cruelty. In fact, most were visibly tormented by the experience. Many of those who administered 450 volts perspired, stuttered, trembled, bit their lips, and even burst into fits of nervous laughter. It was as if they wanted to stop but felt powerless to do so. What does it mean? When Nazis were on trial for their war crimes, their defense was, "I just followed orders." Intrigued by the power of authority implied by this statement, Milgram devised a laboratory situation to mimic the forces that operate in real-life crimes of obedience. As we'll learn throughout this chapter, this classic research cries out the message of social psychology loud and clear: Other people can have a profound impact on our behavior.

On September 11, 2001 in New York City, the morning was sunny, bright, and clear. Then at 8:46 a.m., a Boeing 767 headed from Boston to Los Angeles was hijacked by Middle Eastern terrorists fueled with hatred who crashed the plane into the North Tower of the World Trade Center. Eighteen minutes later, a second jumbo jet plunged into the South Tower. Nobody knew it at the time, but both towers would soon collapse, amputating the skyline of lower Manhattan. Moments later, a third hijacked jet slammed into the Pentagon outside of Washington, DC. A fourth jet, which may have been headed for the White House, then dove into a wooded area in Pennsylvania after its passengers heard of the other attacks and battled their hijackers and forced the plane down. Overall, more than 3,000 people from 82 countries were killed. It was the single most destructive attack in American history (Figure 10.1).

In downtown Manhattan, gray smoke billowed up into a blue city sky as glass, metal, and paper rained onto the ground below. Inside the twin towers, where thousands of people were at work, the upper floors filled with fire, heat, smoke, and fumes. People made last-minute cell-phone calls to helpless loved ones. Remarkably, fleeing workers said that they had crossed paths with firefighters and police officers who climbed up the stairs, many to their own deaths, looking for survivors. Mohammad Salman Hamdani was one such emergency responder. As a Muslim, Hamdani deeply believed that life was sacred. As an emergency responder, Hamdani believed that his life was worth risking to save the lives of others. And his life is what he gave.

On the street, sirens blared everywhere. When the buildings collapsed, daylight turned to night. Chased by an avalanche of powder and rubble, people dropped everything, covered their mouths, and ran as fast as they could. New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, pale and somber, maintained his poise and resolve on camera to address a shaken city and nation.

Away from this site, which would later be dubbed "ground zero," worried friends and relatives flooded phone lines and used e-mail to communicate. Some people experienced such paranoia that they feared terrorism in every airplane, van, briefcase, and person with olive-toned skin and



David McNew/Staff/ Getty Images

Mohammad Salman Hamdani was included in the 2001 USA PATRIOT Act of the U.S. Congress as an example of Muslim Americans who acted heroically on 9/11. His heroism also earned him a memorial in Bayside Queens where his name is now the intersection "Salman Hamdani Way." As a biochemist with dreams of medical school, scholarship awards were established in his name at Rockefeller University and Queens College in New York. Here, his mother continues his legacy.



■ **FIGURE 10.1** September 11, 2001

In New York City on September 11, 2001, tragic scenes illustrated the range of human social behavior. (A) On September 11, 2001, a jumbo jet hijacked by terrorists slammed into the South Tower of the World Trade Center, the second attack of the morning. (B) As workers fled the building, heroic firefighters climbed up the stairs, many to their own death, looking for survivors. (C) On the streets below, people, covered in soot and ash, were dazed. (D) Nearby, families of missing victims posted fliers of their loved ones on walls that would later become memorials.



dark hair. Still, thousands of New Yorkers rallied to offer a helping hand. They brought towels, aspirin, T-shirts, bandages, ice, water bottles, and other necessities. Over the next few weeks, crowds gathered to cheer police, firefighters, and rescue workers. All over the country, people donated thousands of pints of blood and over a billion dollars in relief funds. In an outburst of patriotism, millions of Americans hung flags from their houses and cars. Although some targeted Arab and Muslim citizens for retaliation, most showed restraint. And although some segments of the world population celebrated the attack, the vast majority expressed sadness, sympathy, outrage, and support.

The entire episode raises profound questions about human social behavior. What could possibly have triggered the attack? Were the terrorists intensely frustrated and enraged, or did they blindly follow orders from a leader in whom they believed? In the chaos that ensued, what inspired heroic firefighters, rescue workers, and the passengers who took down the plane in Pennsylvania to sacrifice their lives? Why, afterward, did Americans come together rather than



break apart, gathering in groups at candlelight vigils and patriotic ceremonies and displaying the Stars and Stripes wherever they went? These questions—about aggression, altruism, group pride, intergroup conflict, and perceptions of others—are all questions of **social psychology**: the study of how individuals think, feel, and behave in social situations.

**social psychology** The study of how individuals think, feel, and behave in social situations.

## Social Perception

**10.1** Identify how we can make errors in judgments about others, and reduce those incorrect judgments using psychological tools.

- Define the fundamental attribution error—and is it really “fundamental”?
- Identify the reasons we are slow to revise our first impressions in the light of new evidence.
- Explain various perceptions of physical beauty.

As social beings, humans are drawn to each other. We work together, play together, live together, and often make lifetime commitments to grow old together. In all our interactions, we engage in **social perception**, the process of knowing and evaluating other persons. People are complex, so it’s not easy to form accurate impressions of them. So how do we do it? What kinds of evidence do we use? We cannot actually “see” inner dispositions or states of mind. Therefore, like the detective who tries to reconstruct events from physical traces, witnesses, and other clues, we observe the way people behave, try to explain that behavior, then put all of the pieces together to form an impression.

**social perception** The processes by which we come to know and evaluate other persons.

## Making Attributions

Why did the 9/11 terrorists commit such a vicious act? Many people assumed that their religion, Islam, was the motivator. This assumption fueled a fear or hatred of all Muslims among some people—what is labeled as Islamophobia (Kaplan, 2006; Sheridan, 2006). But, of course, such a fear is contradicted by heroes like Salman, a Muslim who risked his own life to save American strangers. How, then, could Islam be the motivator? What makes the 9/11 terrorists different from Muslims like Salman? In trying to make sense of people from their actions, we must understand what caused their behavior. Fritz Heider (1958) proposed that we are all “intuitive scientists.” We are collecting data about others in an attempt to explain why people behave the way they do. The explanations we develop are called **attributions**, and the process humans experience when making attributions is explained by **attribution theory**.

**attribution** An explanation we create to explain a person’s behavior.

**attribution theory** A set of theories that describe how people explain the causes of behavior.

### ATTRIBUTION THEORY

Psychology can explain human behavior in many ways. Think about Salman. Why did he help? Well, he believed his purpose was to save lives; Salman was self-sacrificing. That is a personal reason for why Salman helped—what Harold Kelley (1967) refers to as a disposition. Another explanation could be that Salman was ordered by his lieutenant to go into the burning tower. That is a situational reason for why Salman helped. Heider (1958) believed that most explanations for behavior fell into one of these two categories: personal or situational. However, attribution theorists aren’t necessarily trying to determine which category provides the best explanation. Instead, attributional theorists are trying to determine *our* social perceptions of why people behave the way they do (Kelley, 1967). Do you think Salman helped because of situational or personal reasons?



Stephanie Kenney/Shutterstock

An activist in Washington, DC holds a protest sign that says “No Islamophobia: Open the Borders” at the Unite the Right 2 counter protest in August 2018.

**fundamental attribution error** A tendency to overestimate the impact of personal causes of behavior and to overlook the role of situations.

### THE FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTION ERROR

Social psychologists devote much research to the role situations play in our behaviors, thoughts, and feelings. However, the typical person does not, especially if that typical person is from an individualistic culture. An individualistic person is raised in a culture that discounts the situation and instead, emphasizes the individual as unique and autonomous (Kuhnen et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2010; Santos et al., 2017). American culture is individualistic. Therefore, when we try to explain the behavior of others, we typically overestimate the role of personal factors and underestimate the role of the situation. You might be thinking, “There’s no way I have this bias!” This bias, called the **fundamental attribution error** (Ross, 1977), is quite pervasive and thus can mislead even the best of us—psychology training or not.

To illustrate the fundamental attribution error, imagine you are parking your car at the grocery store and happen to notice a tall, blonde, White woman exit her Mercedes. You admire her car, then go about your business. After a few forgetful moments (Cereal... Do I need cereal?), you complete your shopping and make your way to the cashier. As fate would have it, you end up in line behind the blonde, female Mercedes owner. Like most of us, you look at what is in her shopping cart. She has three cases of infant formula at \$10.00 per can, two cases of root beer, diapers, organic chicken, vegetables, and other random foods.

Now, stop for a minute. Predict what the woman uses to pay for her items by circling her most likely payment method:

- A. Credit Card
- B. Check
- C. Cash
- D. Debit Card
- E. Coupons
- F. Other (fill in the blank) \_\_\_\_\_

What did she use to pay for her items? She used food stamps.

Wait. Food stamps?

What are you thinking at this very moment? Did your mind dart to the fact that she was driving a Mercedes? Are you wondering why she hasn’t sold the Mercedes? Do you think she is selfish and “working the system”? Well, we know why this woman was driving a Mercedes although she was on food stamps. Darlene Cunha was a successful television producer who lost her job as a result of the market crash. Not only was Darlene unemployed, she was pregnant with twins and had just bought a home with her husband—he also lost his job a few weeks later. His job paid for the Mercedes in full. Now unemployed and with twins, it is their only vehicle. The Mercedes is also incredibly reliable. It starts every time, has excellent brakes, and has advanced airbag technology so her twins are kept safe on the road. Now that we know more about Darlene, do we still judge her for driving a Mercedes? This quick judgment about Darlene and her “working the system” is a fundamental attribution error. We overestimated Darlene’s personal attributions (selfish and “working the system”) and underestimated her situational attributions (sudden job loss, home loan debt, and dependence on a safe and reliable car that was paid for).

What’s going on here? Why do we fail to appreciate the impact of situations? According to Daniel Gilbert and Patrick Malone (1995), the problem stems from *how* attributions are made. Theorists used to assume that people survey all the evidence and then decide on either a personal or situational attribution. Instead, claims Gilbert, there is a two-step process: First, we identify the behavior and make a quick personal attribution, then we try to correct or adjust that inference to account for situational influences. The first step is simple, natural, and effortless—like a reflex. It happens with such automaticity, you are most likely unaware of the conclusions you have drawn about that person (Uleman et al., 2008). When you pictured a White,

blonde, well-dressed woman who drove a Mercedes at the checkout line with food stamps, you probably experienced an instant response. The second step requires attention, thought, and effort.

### ATTRIBUTIONS AS CULTURAL CONSTRUCTIONS

Why is it natural to attribute behavior to persons rather than to the situations they are in? Earlier, you learned that this bias is quite common among individualistic cultures. However, does that mean it is specific to those types of persons? What about nonindividualistic cultures? Many nonindividualistic cultures—specifically, collectivistic cultures—take a more holistic view that focuses on the relationship between persons and their social roles (Cousins, 1989; Kanagawa et al., 2001). Miller (1984) compared and contrasted European American and Indian explanations for certain positive and negative behaviors that happen in their lives. As the age of participants increased, so did differences in responses. Americans made more personal attributions, whereas Indian participants made more situational attributions. Zárte, Uleman, and Voils (2001) compared Latinxs (collectivistic culture) with Anglo Americans (individualistic culture) and found that Anglo Americans exercise a more frequent use of traits when making decisions about an actor's behavior than Latinxs. With the help of neurological feedback, Na and Kitayama (2011) found a similar attribution disparity in collectivists and individualists. Finally, Lee, Shimizu, and Uleman (2015) found that Americans formed more associations between speakers and traits than the Japanese. These findings suggest that individualistic people may be more susceptible to the fundamental attribution error.

### Forming Impressions

In forming an impression of a person, making attributions is only the first step. A second step is to combine and integrate all the evidence into a coherent picture. Studies show that people's impressions of others are generally based on a "weighted average" of all the evidence (Anderson, 1981; Kashima & Kerekes, 1994). This same research also shows, however, that once we do form an impression of someone, we become less and less likely to revise our opinion in light of new evidence, even if it's contradictory. Thus, first impressions are powerful.

### COGNITIVE-CONFIRMATION BIASES

It's often said that first impressions stick, and social psychologists are inclined to agree. In a classic demonstration, Solomon Asch (1946) told a group of research participants that a hypothetical person was "intelligent, industrious, impulsive, critical, stubborn, and envious." He then presented a second group with exactly the same list, but in reverse order. Logically, the two groups should have formed the same impression. Instead, however, participants who heard the first list—in which the positive traits came first—were more favorable in their evaluations than those who heard the second list. Here's a cognitive explanation: Look back at Chapter 6 and apply the serial positioning effect. Is there a high likelihood of remembering items presented first? The answer is yes. This segues nicely into a social explanation: People are influenced more by information they receive early in an interaction than by information that appears later. Think about how often the lasting impression one makes is often the first impression. This finding is known as the **primacy effect**.



Jonathan Weiss/Shutterstock

Here, a store displays signs indicating it accepts SNAP and EBT—government food assistance. What assumptions might you make about a person who you observed using government assistance to buy items?

**primacy effect** The tendency for impressions of others to be heavily influenced by information appearing early in an interaction.



Fizkes/Shutterstock

There are many settings, including job interviews, where first impressions may seem like they have particularly high stakes.



## TRY THIS!

### PRIMACY EFFECT: THE POWER OF FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Are first impressions lasting impressions? Even when first impressions turn out to be wrong, do they still stick? **TRY THIS** variation on Asch's (1946) experiment and see what results you obtain.

Ask a handful of friends to rate on a 1- to 10-point scale how much they like **Angela**, whom you describe as “intelligent, industrious, critical, stubborn, and envious.”

Then ask a handful of different friends to rate on a 1- to 10-point scale how much they like **Sarah**, whom you describe as “envious, stubborn, critical, industrious, and intelligent.”

Average the two sets of ratings. If the primacy effect is operating, which woman do you think would be seen in a more positive light, Angela or Sarah? What are the results?

The primacy effect occurs for two reasons. The first is that we become somewhat less attentive to later behavioral evidence once we have already formed an impression. We can apply this effect to job interviews. When a job candidate is introduced to the hiring committee, a dynamic between the parties ensues. This dynamic can be positive and result in a rapport between the job candidate and the hiring committee (Barrick et al., 2012; Swider et al., 2016). Why does this matter? Highly qualified job candidates who are not good at building rapport might get passed over for a job. One way to combat this could be to use structured interviews so all job candidates are asked the exact same questions and scored on their performance.

To test this, Swider and colleagues (2016) conducted mock interviews in a controlled setting with 163 undergraduate students who needed career preparation and 54 human resources graduate students who were highly trained in delivering structured interviews. Before each structured interview began, mock candidates were given 2 to 3 minutes of introductions. Interviewers scored job candidates on their initial impression of introductions. Immediately after, the structured interview began. Questions that were not part of the structured interview were strictly prohibited. Swider and colleagues (2016) found that scores on the introductions portion were highly correlated with scores in the structured interview portion. First impressions matter. The better your first impression is, the higher your interview score.

Does this mean that even a plan won't stop us from a life of primacy? Not necessarily. If we are tired or unstimulated, our attention may wane. Donna Webster and others (1996) found that college students “leaped to conclusions” about a person on the basis of preliminary information when they were mentally fatigued from having just taken a 2-hour exam. When the students were alert and sufficiently motivated to keep from tuning out, this bias was diminished. Another way to combat first impressions is mindfulness (Hopthrow et al., 2016). One tested mindfulness exercise is the raisin task, discussed in Chapter 8 (Jordan et al., 2014; Ostafin & Kassman, 2012; Weger et al., 2012). The full experience of eating two raisins requires the person to slow down and focus attention on the smell, taste, texture, and appearance of each raisin before and during consumption. Participants who completed the raisin task before making a judgment were less likely to engage in bias toward a writer's attitude compared to those who did not complete the raisin task (Hopthrow et al., 2016).

More unsettling is the second reason for primacy, known as the change-of-meaning hypothesis. Once people form an impression, they later interpret inconsistent information in light of that impression. Asch's research shows how malleable the meaning of a trait can be. When people are told that a kind person is *calm*, they assume that the person is gentle, peaceful, and serene. When a cruel person is said to be *calm*, however, the same word is interpreted to mean cool, shrewd, and calculating. There are many examples to illustrate the point. Depending on your first impression, the word *proud* can mean self-respecting or conceited; *critical* can mean astute or picky; and *impulsive* can mean spontaneous or reckless (Hamilton & Zanna, 1974; Watkins & Peynircioglu, 1984).

## BEHAVIORAL-CONFIRMATION BIASES

As social perceivers, we interpret new information in light of our existing beliefs and preferences. At times, we may even unwittingly *create* support for these beliefs and preferences. A classic study by Rosenthal and Jacobson showed that teachers who are given positive or negative expectations of a student, perhaps based on an IQ score, alter their behavior toward that student, setting into motion a self-fulfilling prophecy. This teacher expectations study inspired—and continues to inspire—a great deal of research (Egalite & Kisida, 2018; Tobisch & Dresel, 2017; Urdan & Bruchmann, 2018).

This process is at work not only in schools but in other settings, too, including the military (McNatt, 2000), sports (Siekanska et al., 2013), job interviews (Dougherty et al., 1994; Phillips & Dipboye, 1989), and interrogations (Kassin et al., 2003; Minhas et al., 2016; Villalobos & Davis, 2016). According to research cited by Minhas and colleagues (2016), dangerous biases in law enforcement are negative stereotypes and prejudices toward a person simply based on their group membership. Take juveniles, for instance. Meyer and Reppucci (2007) discovered that police have a certain perception toward juveniles in general and a contradictory perception toward juveniles in an interrogation setting. Reppucci and colleagues (2010) replicated these findings. According to their results, police generally believe juveniles can be treated like adults during interrogations, suggesting that once under investigation, a suspected juvenile has an adult level of reasoning and/or maturity. A plethora of psychological research demonstrates this is not true. This false belief can possibly explain why Feld (2012) found that interrogations conducted on 16- and 17-year-old juveniles in Minnesota frequently included tactics such as presenting false evidence, accusing the juvenile of lying, and urging the juvenile to tell the truth, all in an attempt to increase fear or anxiety. What can be the result? A false confession (Perillo & Kassin, 2011).

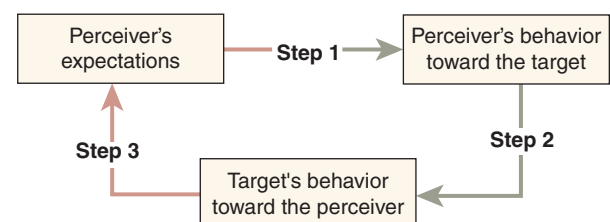
How do social perceivers transform beliefs into reality? As shown by research on teacher expectations, the process involves a three-step chain of events (see Figure 10.2). First, a perceiver forms an opinion of a target person—based on the target’s physical appearance, reputation, gender, race, or initial interactions. In policing, research demonstrates that interrogators more often than not presume the suspect to be guilty, even before the interview is conducted (Kassin et al., 2003; Mortimer & Shepherd, 1999; Moston et al., 1992). Second, the perceiver behaves in a manner that is consistent with that first impression. Thus, the suspect seems to demonstrate guilt by smirking, shifting their gaze, and squirming in their chair. Third, the target unwittingly adjusts their behavior to the perceiver’s actions. A suspect could easily become defensive or shut down after hours of receiving false accusations from a police officer. By steering interactions with others along a path narrowed by our beliefs, we engage in a “behavioral-confirmation” bias that keeps us from judging others objectively.

## Attraction

When you meet someone for the first time, what are you drawn to? Common sense is filled with contradiction: Does familiarity breed fondness or contempt? Do birds of a feather flock together, or do opposites attract? And is beauty the object of our desire, or do we think appearances are deceiving? Over the years, researchers have identified various determinants of attraction (Berscheid & Reis, 1998; Birnbaum, 2018; Brehm et al., 2001; Lamm et al., 1997). Two of the most powerful are similarity and physical attractiveness.

**FIGURE 10.2** The Behavioral-Confirmation Process

People can create false support for their first impressions through this three-step chain of events.



**mere-exposure effect** The attraction to a stimulus that results from increased exposure to it.

### SIMILARITY AND LIKING

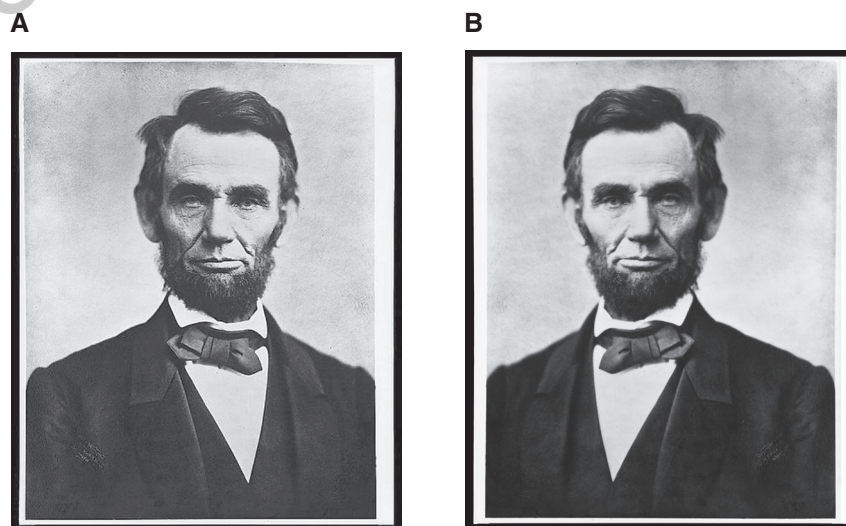
Time and again, studies have revealed a basic principle of attraction: The more exposure we have to a stimulus, and the more familiar it becomes—whether it’s a face, a foreign word, a melody, or a geometric form—the more we like it (Bornstein, 1989; Harmon-Jones & Allen, 2001; Zajonc, 1968). In Chapter 5, we learned that this **mere-exposure effect** occurs even when stimuli are presented without a participant’s awareness. Mere exposure can also influence our self-evaluations. Imagine, for example, that you are Abraham Lincoln. You are asked to choose one of two photographs for display in the White House. Which photograph would you choose? Look at Figure 10.3 and choose either photo A or B.

Now, imagine you are a close friend of Abraham Lincoln. Using the same two photographs, choose the photograph you prefer as Lincoln’s friend. Did you choose photograph A both times? Theodore Mita and others (1977) tried this experiment with female college students and found that most preferred their own mirror images (long live the selfie!), whereas their friends liked the actual photos. In both cases, the preference was for the view of the face that was most familiar. For our Abraham Lincoln example, you most likely chose photo A because it is the one that presents Abraham as you know him. However, Abraham himself would have been most familiar with his mirror image—photo B.

Familiarity preference does not stop with our own images. As a general rule, people prefer to associate with others who are similar to themselves. According to Byrne and others (1986), this effect on attraction is a two-step process: (1) We avoid others who are very different; then (2) among those who are left, we seek out those people who are the most similar to us. As a result, friends and couples are more likely than are randomly paired persons to share common attitudes and interests. They are also more likely to be similar in their age, race, religion, education level, intelligence, height, and economic status. Genetic research supports these findings. A study by Domingue and colleagues (2018) demonstrated genetic similarities among pairs of friends, while other studies have demonstrated genetic similarities among spouses (Domingue et al., 2014; Guo et al., 2014; Robinson et al., 2017; Zou et al., 2015). The more similar two individuals are, the better the chances that the relationship will last (Byrne, 1971, 1997). Commenting on the magnet-like appeal of similarity, even in diverse multicultural societies, sociologist John Macionis (2001) notes, “Cupid’s arrow is aimed by society more than we think.” And society isn’t all that’s involved. Genetics also play a role. One unfortunate result is that by associating only with similar others, people form social niches that are homogeneous and divided along the lines of race, ethnic background, age, religion, level of education, and occupation (McPherson et al., 2001).

#### FIGURE 10.3 Mirror, Mirror

WNYC’s Radiolab posted these images of Abraham Lincoln (A and B) to accompany their podcast about our mirror selves. The story is titled “Mirror, Mirror” (Abumrad & Krulwich, 2011).



Source: Pictor/iStock.



## PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS

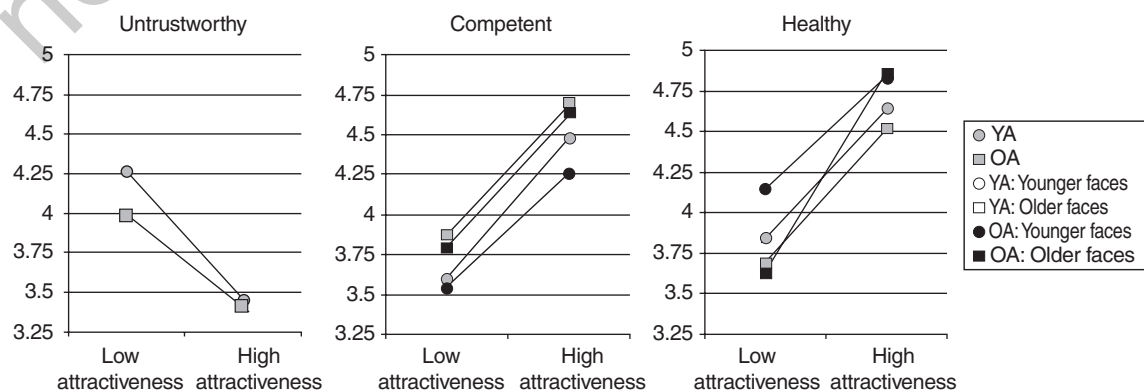
When we first encounter people, our perceptions are influenced in subtle ways by their height, weight, skin color, hair color, clothing, and other aspects of outward appearance. The most influential aspect of appearance is physical attractiveness; as children, we were told that “beauty is only skin deep.” Yet as adults, we like others who are good looking. Studies have shown that in the affairs of our social world, attractive people fare better in the way they are treated by teachers, employers, judges, juries, and others (Langlois et al., 2000). In fact, a study on mock job interviews demonstrated that ratings of physical appearance were positively correlated with initial impressions (Swider et al., 2016). Through interviews conducted in the United States and Canada, for example, economists discovered that across occupational groups, good-looking men and women earned more money than others who were comparable but less attractive (Hamermesh & Biddle, 1994). This can be explained by the attractiveness halo effect—what is seen as beautiful is assumed to be good. Many studies have replicated this effect, including one by Zebrowitz and Franklin (2014) that included younger and older adult raters. Their study demonstrated that faces considered attractive were also rated as healthier, more competent, and less untrustworthy than faces considered less attractive. You can review their findings in Figure 10.4.

How do we define *attractiveness*? Is beauty an objective and measurable quality, like height and weight? Or is beauty subjective, existing in the eye of the beholder? Some psychologists believe that some faces are inherently more attractive than others (Rhodes & Zebrowitz, 2001). This “objective” view of beauty has two sources of evidence. First, when people rate faces on a 10-point scale, there are typically high levels of agreement over which are more or less attractive (Langlois et al., 2000). It appears that people prefer faces with eyes, noses, lips, and other features that are not too different from the average. Langlois and Roggman (1990) showed actual yearbook photographs to college students as well as computerized facial composites that “averaged” the features in these photos. Time and again, participants preferred the averaged composites to the actual faces. Other studies have since confirmed this effect (Langlois et al., 1994; Rhodes et al., 1999). Still other studies have shown that people are attracted to faces that are symmetrical—in other words, faces in which the right and left sides closely mirror each other (Grammer & Thornhill, 1994; Little et al., 2011; Mealey et al., 1999). The more symmetrical, like the face of Bella Hadid (Figure 10.5), the higher the attractiveness rating.

A second source of evidence comes from the infant research laboratory, which shows that even babies who are too young to have learned their culture’s standards of beauty exhibit a measurable preference for faces seen as attractive by adults. Judging from their eye movements,

■ **FIGURE 10.4** Attractiveness Halo Effect

Zebrowitz and Franklin (2014) found that the attractiveness halo effect occurred across the lifespan when both the participants and target faces were younger and older. Can you guess how this finding, specifically on untrustworthiness, applies to the criminal justice system?



Source: Leslie A. Zebrowitz & Robert G. Franklin Jr. (2014) The Attractiveness Halo Effect and the Babyface Stereotype in Older and Younger Adults: Similarities, Own-Age Accentuation, and Older Adult Positivity Effects, *Experimental Aging Research*, 40:3, 375-393, DOI: 10.1080/0361073X.2014.897151.

### FIGURE 10.5 Global Beauty

People from different cultures enhance their appearance in different ways. Pictured here are a Mejecodoteri woman from Amazon Venezuela (A), a Tuareg woman from Niger (B), a woman from the state of Gujarat in India (C), and American model Bella Hadid (D). While beauty may be subjective, Dr. Julian De Silva, a face mapping specialist, proposed a scientific approach to measuring beauty. With face mapping, we can evaluate facial symmetry by looking at the distances between nose and mouth, mouth and chin, pupils, and forehead and brow. Our own eyes make these distance and symmetry judgments almost in an instant, without us even knowing that we are looking for these calculations.

A



B



C



D



Source: (Clockwise from upper left) DEA/G. SIOEN/Contributor/Getty Images; DEA/G. SIOEN/Contributor/Getty Image; Frans Lemmens/Alamy Stock Photo; Jonas Gustavsson/ Associated Press; Ajit Solanki/Associated Press.

young infants spend more time gazing at attractive faces than at unattractive ones—regardless of whether the faces are young or old, male or female, or Black or White (Langlois et al., 1991). Other studies have similarly revealed that infants look longer at faces that are “averaged” in their features (Rubenstein et al., 1999). “These kids don’t read *Vogue* or watch TV,” notes Langlois, “yet they make the same judgments as adults” (Cowley, 1996, p. 66).

Other researchers argue that beauty is relative. People from different cultures enhance their appearance with face painting, makeup, plastic surgery, hairstyling, scarring, tattooing, the molding of bones, the filing of teeth, braces, and the piercing of body parts—all contributing to “the enigma of beauty” (Newman, 2000). Body structure also contributes to attractiveness. The waist-to-hip ratio (WHR; Singh, 1993) has become one highly researched indicator in various cultures. Studies have found that men’s preferred WHR in women does vary depending on culture. For example, New Zealand prefers women with a 0.7 WHR (Dixson et al., 2009), women from Cameroon get more preference with a 0.8 WHR (Dixson et al., 2007), and Tanzanian men prefer women with a 0.9 WHR (Marlowe & Wetsman, 2001). However, these cultural preferences are not set in stone. Men who lived on a reserve in Peru changed their WHR preferences for female bodies after spending 30 years living away from the reserve where they were exposed to Western media (Yu & Shepard, 1998). However, it doesn’t take 30 years for attractiveness judgments to change. Participants who viewed nude *Playboy* models later lowered their ratings of the attractiveness of average-looking women—the result of a contrast effect (Kenrick et al., 1989), and we evaluate others as more attractive after we have grown to like them (Gross & Crofton, 1977).

## Social Influence

### 10.2 Estimate which situations can have the greatest impact on behavioral change.

- Differentiate between public and private conformity.
- List the ingredients for persuasive communication.
- Explain why a change in behavior can elicit a change in attitude.
- Identify when groups arouse us, relax us, and sometimes make bad decisions.

Advertisers hire celebrities and supermodels to sell soft drinks, sneakers, and other products. Sports fans spread the “wave” and chant “Defense!” in a spectacular show of unison. Performers with stage fright tremble, turn pale, and freeze before appearing in front of an audience. These examples illustrate that people influence one another in various ways. As you’ll learn, the source of influence may be a person or group, its effect may be on behavior or attitude, and the change may be socially hurtful or helpful to others. In all the forms that it takes, social influence is pervasive (Cialdini & Trost, 1998).

### Social Influence as “Automatic”

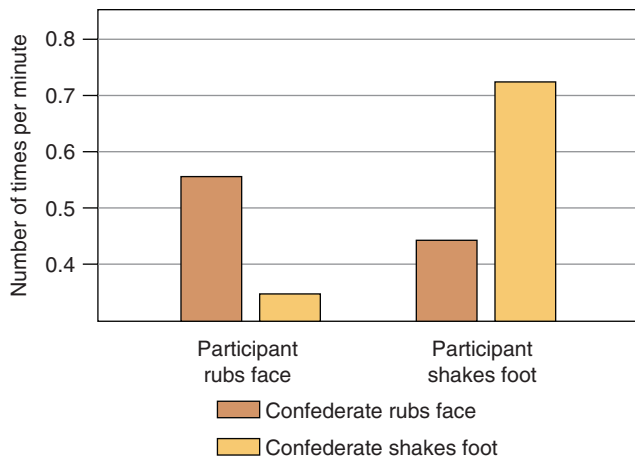
As social animals, human beings are vulnerable to a host of subtle, almost reflex-like influences. Without realizing it, we yawn when we see someone else yawn and laugh when we hear others laugh. Knowing that people imitate others, TV producers infuse their situation comedies with canned laughter to make viewers think the shows are funny, political candidates trumpet their own inflated poll results to attract new voters, and bartenders stuff dollar bills into empty tip jars to draw more money from customers.

Research demonstrates the compelling nature of this automatic and nonconscious social response (Dijksterhuis & Bargh, 2001). In one study, Milgram and others (1969) had research confederates stop on a busy street in New York City, look up, and gawk at a sixth-floor window of a nearby building. Films shot from behind the window showed that 80% of passersby stopped and gazed up when they saw the confederates. In another study, Chartrand and Bargh (1999) set up participants to work with a partner, a confederate who exhibited a habit of rubbing his face or shaking his foot. Hidden cameras revealed that, without realizing it, the participants mimicked these motor behaviors, rubbing their face or shaking a foot to match their partner’s behavior. Chartrand and Bargh (1999) called this finding “the chameleon effect,” after the lizard that changes colors according to its physical environment (see Figure 10.6).



### FIGURE 10.6 The Chameleon Effect

This study shows the number of times per minute participants rubbed their faces and shook their feet when with a confederate who was rubbing his face or shaking his foot (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999).



Source: Chartrand & Bargh, 1999.

Sometimes, the automatic social influences on us are not funny but are potentially hazardous to our health, such as when people die of suicide while under the influence of certain fanatic cults (Galanter, 1999) or information featured in mass media (Etzersdorfer & Sonneck, 1998; Phillips, 1982; Phillips & Lesyna, 1995). The Netflix series, *13 Reasons Why*, based on the book by Jay Asher, sparked controversy because of its possible suicide contagion (Devitt, 2018). Consider the less extreme but still unusual events that occurred in a Tennessee high school. It all started when a teacher noticed a gas-like smell in her classroom and then came down with a headache, nausea, shortness of breath, and dizziness. Word spread, others reported the same symptoms, and soon the school was evacuated, with 80 students and 19 staff members taken to a local emergency room. Nothing showed up in the results of blood, urine, or other medical tests and no gases, pesticides, or other toxins were detected in or near the building. What the investigation did turn up was that students who reported feeling ill that day were more likely than others to have seen someone with symptoms, heard about someone with symptoms, or knew a classmate who was ill. The researchers, who reported the findings in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, concluded that the problems were the product of “mass psychogenic illness”—a profound form of social influence (Jones et al., 2000).

concluded that the problems were the product of “mass psychogenic illness”—a profound form of social influence (Jones et al., 2000).

## Conformity

**Conformity**, defined as the tendency for people to bring their behavior in line with group norms, is a fact of social life. Cast in a positive light, conformity promotes harmony, group solidarity, and peaceful coexistence (e.g., when people assume their places in a waiting line). Cast in a negative light, conformity has harmful effects (e.g., when people drink too much at parties or tell offensive ethnic or sexually explicit jokes because others are doing the same). For social psychologists, the goal is not to make moral judgments, but to determine the factors that promote conformity and the reasons for it.

### THE EARLY CLASSICS

In 1936, Muzafer Sherif published a classic laboratory experiment on how norms develop in small groups. The participants in his study, thinking their visual perception was being tested, sat in a dark room, saw a beam of light, and then estimated the distance the light had moved. This procedure was repeated several times. The participants didn’t realize it, but the light never moved. The movement they thought they saw was merely an optical illusion. At first, each participant sat alone and reported their perceptions only to the experimenter (most estimates stabilized in the range of 1 to 10 inches). During the next few days, they returned to work in three-person groups. Each time a beam of light flashed, participants stated their estimates one by one. As shown in Figure 10.7, initial estimates varied considerably, but the individuals eventually converged on a common perception, with each group establishing its own set of norms.

Fifteen years after Sherif’s experiment, Asch (1951) constructed a different situation. Imagine yourself in the following study. You sign up for a psychology experiment; when you arrive, you find six other students waiting around a table. You take an empty seat, and the experimenter explains



Album/Alamy Stock Photo

The popular and controversial Netflix series, *13 Reasons Why*, was based on the book of the same title by Jay Asher. It takes the perspective of a teenage female who records her life in an audio diary and has her diary mailed to a group of classmates after her planned death.

**conformity** A tendency to alter one’s opinion or behavior in ways that are consistent with group norms.

that he is measuring people's ability to make visual discriminations. As a warm-up, he asks you and the others to indicate which of three comparison lines is identical in length to a standard line (see Figure 10.8). That seems easy enough. The experimenter then asks you all to take turns in order of your seating position. Starting on his left, he asks the first person for a judgment. Seeing that you are in the next-to-last position, you patiently await your turn. The opening moments pass uneventfully. The task is clear and everyone agrees on the answers. On the third set of lines, however, the first participant selects the wrong line. Huh? What is wrong with this guy? Before you know it, the next four participants choose the same wrong line. Now it's your turn. What do you think? Better yet, what do you do? As you may have guessed by now, the other "participants" were actually confederates trained to make incorrect judgments on certain trials. The right answers were clear. In a control group, where participants made their judgments alone, performance was virtually errorless. Yet those in the experimental group went along with the incorrect majority 37% of the time. This result may seem surprising, but other studies have shown that people conform to others on a variety of cognitive tasks (Larsen, 1990; Schneider & Watkins, 1996).

Both Sherif and Asch found that people are influenced by the behavior of others. But there is an important difference in the types of conformity exhibited in these studies. In short, Sherif's participants experienced informational influence, whereas Asch's participants experienced normative influence (Campbell & Fairey, 1989; Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). **Informational influence** leads people to conform because they assume that the majority is correct. For example, imagine that your instructor has asked the class, "With a show of hands, who thinks that the answer is 'True?'" You didn't complete the reading, so you aren't quite sure what the answer is. You look around the room and see that the majority of students have their hand up. So, you think to yourself, "All of these students think the answer is 'True,' so I will raise my hand." You believe the other students in class have more knowledge than you do, so you answer the same way to appear as if you also have that knowledge. In **normative influence**, people conform because they fear the social rejection that accompanies deviance. Now, imagine that your instructor is talking about cultural differences in food choices and asks, "With a show of hands, who here has ever eaten a tarantula?" Your heart races a little bit as you hear the class vocalize a long, disgusted, "Eeeewwwwwwwwwww!" Immediately, you recognize that you, in fact, HAVE eaten a tarantula thanks to your study-abroad experience in Cambodia... and it was actually quite delicious. Do you raise your hand? No. Way.

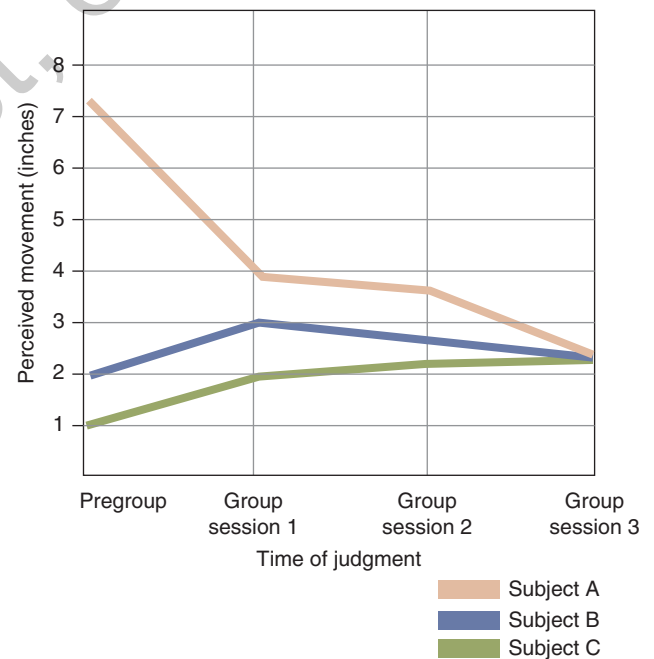
This decision is made for good reason. People who stray from the norm are disliked and often are ridiculed and laughed at (Levine, 1989; Levine & Tindale, 2015). These types of negative social reactions are hard to take. In fact, Williams and his colleagues (2002) conducted a series of controlled experiments in which they found that when people are socially *ostracized*—that is, neglected,



Social influence and conformity extends to many areas of life, including what we decide to wear in various settings. We may conform to explicit or implicit clothing choices such as wearing suits in a business setting if our colleagues do.

### FIGURE 10.7 A Classic Case of Suggestibility

This group in Sherif's study illustrates how participants' estimates of the apparent movement of light converged over time. Gradually, the group established its own set of norms.



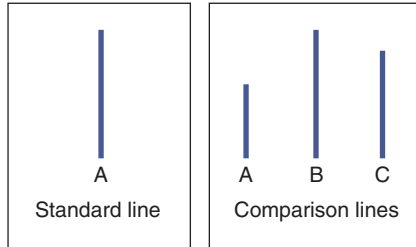
Source: Muzafer Sherif, 1936.

**informational influence** Conformity motivated by the belief that others are correct.

**normative influence** Conformity motivated by a fear of social rejection.

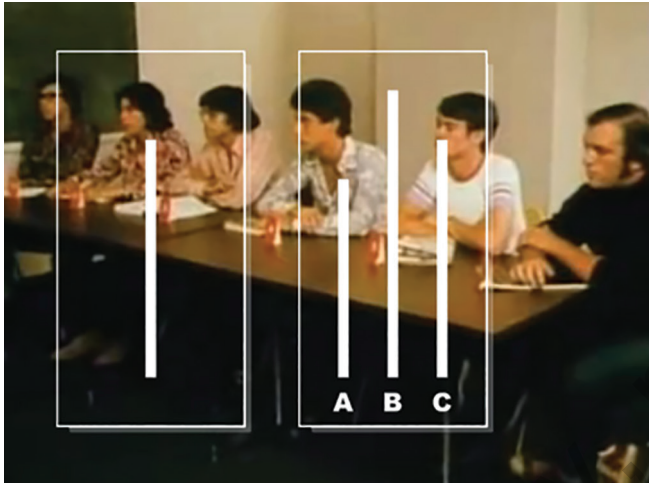
### FIGURE 10.8 Line-Judgment Task in Asch's Study

Which comparison line—A, B, or C—is the same length as the standard line?



Source: Asch, S. E. (1955).

D-janous via Wikimedia Commons, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0



After two uneventful rounds in Asch's line-judgment study, the subject faces a dilemma. Confederates 1 through 5 all gave the same wrong answer. Should he give his own answer or conform?

ignored, and excluded in a live or Internet chat room conversation—they react by feeling hurt, angry, alone, and, in some cases, helpless. The reactions of those ostracized at school (Saylor et al., 2012, 2013) and the workplace (O'Reilly et al., 2014) have been described by researchers as more severe than if they were bullied.

### MAJORITY INFLUENCE

Communication often takes place over the Internet and via text messaging, so you may wonder: Do the social forces that influence people in face-to-face groups also operate in virtual groups, where the members are anonymous? Yes. McKenna and Bargh (1998) observed behavior in a number of social media groups in which people with common interests posted and responded to messages on a range of topics such as obesity, sexual orientation, and the stock market. The groups in this situation consisted of people who chose to hide their true identities from people in their lives (for example, people who have concealed their sexual orientation and/or identity from known others). However, in this context, the group members did not stay silent or

avoid conversation. Instead, they were highly responsive to social feedback from other members. Here we learn that the majority is powerful in a positive way—it can empower members to share their feelings because those feelings result in encouragement from the masses.

This responsiveness and togetherness has been replicated in research investigating online support groups for persons who identify as transgender (Cipolletta et al., 2017) and bisexual (Maliepaard, 2017) and for individuals with an intellectual disability (Shpigelman, 2018). Furthermore, people often choose to share more positive than negative traits about themselves in the hopes of gaining majority approval from online communities (Bargh et al., 2002; Marriott & Buchanan, 2014). Messages and information expected to be garnered with approval are more readily posted than those expected to meet disapproval. Even the response medium for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter fosters this with the “Like” button. Have you ever wondered why a “thumbs down” option does not

exist? When it comes to social support and rejection, even virtual groups have the power to shape our behavior (Bargh et al., 2002; Tosun & Lajunen, 2009; Williams et al., 2000).

Realizing that people can be pressured by others is only the first step in understanding the process of social influence. The next step is to identify the situational factors that make us more or less likely to conform. One obvious factor is the size of a group. Common sense suggests that as a majority increases in size, so does its impact. Actually, it is not that simple. Asch (1956) varied the size of his groups by using 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, or 15 confederates, and he found that conformity rose only up to a point. After four confederates, the amount of *additional* influence was negligible, subject to the law of diminishing returns. Latané (1981) likened this impact on an individual to the way lightbulbs illuminate a surface. Add a second bulb in a room, and the effect is dramatic. Add a tenth bulb, and its impact is barely noticed (see Figure 10.9).

In Asch's initial study, participants were pitted against a unanimous majority. But what if they had an ally, a partner in dissent? Put yourself in this situation: How do you think having an ally would affect *you*? Varying this aspect of his experiment, Asch found that the presence of just one confederate who gave the correct answer reduced conformity by almost 80%. In fact, any dissenter—even one whose competence is questionable—can break the spell cast by a unanimous majority and reduce the pressure to conform (Allen & Levine, 1971).

Finally, cultural factors play an invisible but certain role in conformity to tasks similar to that developed by Asch. In many Western cultures—notably, the United States, Australia, Great



Britain, Canada, and the Netherlands—independence and autonomy are highly valued. In contrast, many cultures of Asia, Africa, and Latin America place a value on social harmony and “fitting in” for the sake of the community. Among the Bantu of Zimbabwe, for example, an African people who scorn deviance, 51% of those placed in an Asch-like study conformed to the majority’s wrong answer, which is more than the number typically obtained in the West (Bond & Smith, 1996; Triandis, 1994). Not surprisingly, many anthropologists—interested in how cultures shape individuals—study the processes of conformity and conflict (Spradley et al., 2000). So do those interested in management techniques. Rink and colleagues (2013) conducted a review on a 50-year span of research on team acceptance for newcomer knowledge. They found that newcomer knowledge was rarely utilized, even when that knowledge was helpful.

### OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY

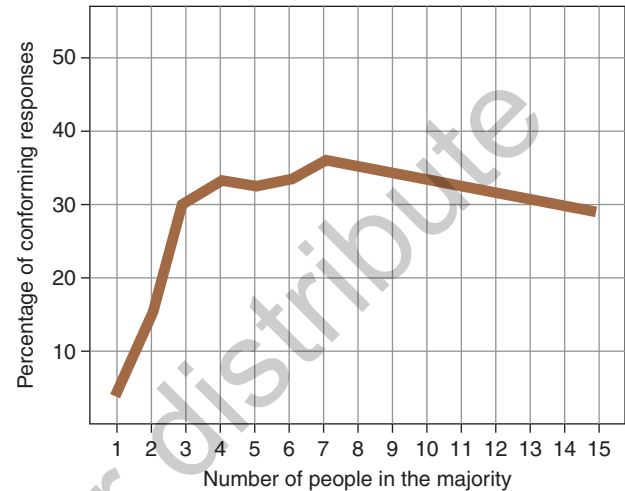
In World War II, Nazi officials participated in the deaths of millions of Jewish men, women, and children. When they came to trial for these crimes, their defense was always the same: “I was just following orders.” Was this episode a fluke or a historical aberration? In *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*, historian Daniel Goldhagen (1996) argues that many ordinary German people were willing accomplices in the Holocaust—not just following orders. On the other hand, human crimes of obedience are not unique to Nazi Germany and are committed all over the world (Kelman & Hamilton, 1989). On one most extraordinary occasion, such obedience was carried to its limit: In 1978, 912 men and women of the Peoples Temple cult obeyed an order from the Reverend Jim Jones to kill themselves and their children.

To study the power of authority, Milgram conducted the dramatic experiments described at the start of this chapter. In his 1974 book, *Obedience to Authority*, Milgram reported on the results of having put 1,000 participants into a situation in which they were ordered by an experimenter to administer painful electric shocks to a confederate (Figure 10.10). Recall that participants thought they were “teachers” testing the effects of punishment on learning and that each time the “learner” made a mistake, they were to deliver a shock of increasing intensity. The participants could not see the learner, but they could hear grunts of pain, objections, loud screams, and eventual silence. Yet at each step, they were ordered to continue up the shock scale. Despite the pain participants thought they were inflicting, and despite the guilt and anguish they were experiencing, 65% in Milgram’s initial study delivered the ultimate punishment of 450 volts.

Similar to the questions we pondered after 9/11, people pondered if Milgram’s participants were simply just evil. On the contrary, most participants were tormented by the experience—they demonstrated uncomfortable body language, pleaded with the experimenter, and paused numerous times throughout the study. Regardless of the internal struggle, comparable levels of obedience were also then found among men, women, and college students all over the world, leading one author to ask, *Are We All Nazis?* (Askenasy, 1978). Indeed, high levels of obedience

■ **FIGURE 10.9** Group Size and Conformity

By varying the number of confederates, Asch found that conformity increased with the size of the majority, but only up to a point. As you can see, 15 confederates had no more impact than did 4.



Source: Asch, S. E. (1955).

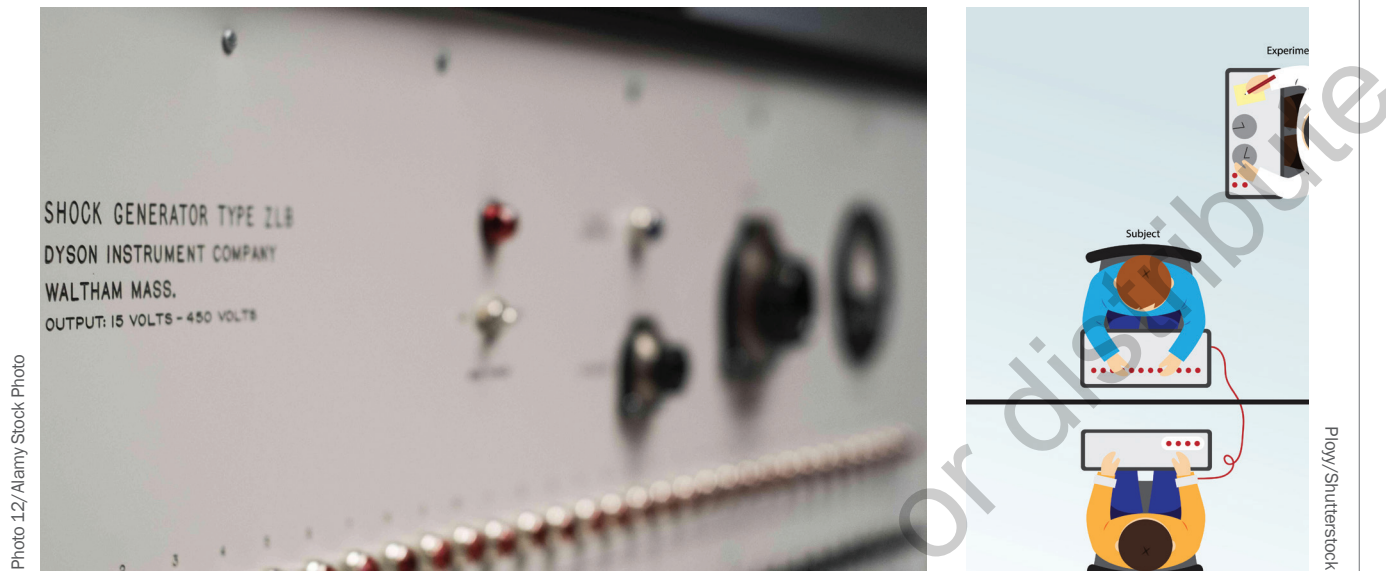


Records of the U.S. Office of War Information, 1926 - 1951; Series: Photographs of Allied and Axis Personalities and Activities, 1942 - 1945

Taken to extreme, blind obedience can have tragic results. In World War II, Nazi officials killed millions of Jews in the Holocaust. Were these Germans willing participants, as suggested by Daniel Goldhagen in his 1996 book, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*, or were they just following orders, as subjects did in Milgram’s research?

### FIGURE 10.10 The Milgram Experiments

Milgram's subjects used the shock generator shown here (A) to seemingly deliver up to 450 volts to a confederate who was strapped into his chair (B).



were found just a few years ago in studies much like Milgram's that were conducted in Poland (Dolinski et al., 2017).

But wait... what if we change things up a bit? What if we take the white coat off of the experimenter? What if the learner is in the room with the participant? Do those manipulations make a difference in the number of participants who continuously obey? Well, you can get the answers to these questions in **You and Psychological Science! Milgram's Lessons on Decreasing Harm**. The short answer is this: by changing things up a bit, we can reduce or increase the number of participants that obey the experimenter. Many systematic variations of Milgram's study have occurred over the years, with variations in the authority figure, victim proximity, and situation. For example, some of these replications have made manipulations such as replacing the experimenter with an average person (authority figure), placing the learner and the teacher in the same room (victim proximity), and carrying out the study in a run-down office building (situation). The closer in proximity the learner is to the teacher, the lower the obedience levels. The opposite goes for experimenter to teacher proximity; the further the experimenter is from the teacher, the lower the obedience. Also, how the situation is staged and what language is used when the order is given to the participant can reduce or increase obedience. The less professional the setting, the lower the percentage of obedient participants.

However, there are still those few participants who obey regardless of authority proximity, victim, or situation. Take the real story of a McDonald's in Kentucky where an employee was wrongfully strip searched by her assistant manager and her assistant manager's fiancé (ABC News, 2006). A hoax gone terribly awry began with a phone call from a man pretending to be a police officer (authority figure). The caller told the assistant manager who he was and his purpose for the call. He claimed an employee, Louise Ogborn, was a thief (victim). From there, the caller instructed the assistant manager to make innocent Louise strip, dance around the office, and do jumping jacks. Regardless of Louise's pleas, tears, and strong words of innocence, the assistant manager continued to do as the caller instructed. Eventually, the caller instructed the assistant

manager to get her fiancé to watch Louise so the store would run as needed until the officer could officially detain Louise.

During that time, Louise was sexually harassed and abused. After a 3-hour ordeal, another employee refused to participate in the abuse and called an area manager who put a stop to it all. During interviews, the assistant manager claimed, “I honestly thought he [the caller] was a police officer.” Several other fast food restaurant managers in the United States fell for the same hoax. Obedience is real. It is the reason why Louise did as she was told. In fact, Louise stated, “My parents taught me when an adult tells you to do something, that’s what you do.” Can you think of an example of when you did something you didn’t want to, but you did it anyway because an authority figure told you to do it? Clearly, authority is a social issue of such massive importance that social psychologists all over the world continue to ponder and debate the ramifications of Milgram’s studies (Blass, 2000).



Brian Bohannon/Associated Press

Louise Ogborn was not supposed to be at work during the dreadful call that changed her life. Louise had volunteered to stay at work late after her shift officially ended. In return for her kindness, Louise was sexually assaulted and abused. As a result, a jury awarded Louise \$6.1 million in total damages and expenses. The man who made the call and impersonated a police officer, Walter Nix, was sentenced to 5 years in prison.

## LEARNING CHECK

### Social Study

The left column contains terms related to social influences. Match each of them to its closest description.

1. Social perception	a. The processes by which we come to know and evaluate other persons
2. Attribution theory	b. A tendency to alter one’s opinion or behavior in ways consistent with group norms
3. Fundamental attribution error	c. A set of theories that describe how people explain the causes of behavior
4. Primacy effect	d. The tendency for impressions of others to be heavily influenced by information appearing early in an interaction
5. Conformity	e. Conformity motivated by the belief that others are correct
6. Informational influence	f. Conformity motivated by a fear of social rejection
7. Normative influence	g. A tendency to overestimate the impact of personal causes of behavior and to overlook the role of situations

(Answers: 1. a; 2. c; 3. g; 4. d; 5. b; 6. e; 7. f)

## Attitude Change

People often change their behavior in response to social pressure from a group or figure of authority. These changes, however, are typically limited to one act in one situation at one fleeting moment in time. For the effects to endure, it is necessary to change attitudes, not just behaviors. An **attitude** is a positive, negative, mixed, or indifferent reaction toward a person, object, or idea. People hold quite passionate attitudes about a whole range of issues—from abortion rights, political correctness, and the way to approach the war on terrorism to whether they prefer Google or DuckDuckGo as an Internet search engine. Thus, whether the goal is to win votes on Election Day, get consumers to buy a product, raise funds for a worthy cause, or combat sexual harassment in the military, attitude change is the key to a deeper, more lasting form of social influence (Ajzen, 2001; Eagly & Chaiken, 1998; Glaser et al., 2015; Petty et al., 1997; Petty & Cacioppo, 2019; Wood, 2000).

**attitude** A positive, negative, or mixed reaction to any person, object, or idea.



## PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Persuasion, which is the process of changing attitudes, is a part of everyday life. The most common approach is to make a persuasive communication (Figure 10.11). A familiar example of this is in American politics: Every 4 years, presidential candidates launch extensive campaigns for office. In a way, if you've seen one election, you've seen them all. The names and dates change, but repeatedly, opposing candidates accuse each other of ducking the issues and turning the election into a popularity contest. Whether or not the accusations are true, they show that politicians are keenly aware that they can win votes by two very different methods. They can stick to the issues, or they can base their appeal on slogans, jingles, flag-waving crowds, and other grounds.

To account for these varying approaches, Petty and Cacioppo (1986) proposed a two-track model of persuasion. When people have the ability and motivation to think critically about the contents of a message, they take the **central route to persuasion**. In these instances, people are influenced by the strength and quality of the arguments. When people do not have the ability or motivation to pay close attention to the issues, however, they take mental shortcuts along the **peripheral route to persuasion**. In this case, people may be influenced by a speaker's appearance, slogans, one-liners, emotions, audience reactions, and other superficial cues (Kergoat et al., 2017).

One way to look at these routes is to think of persuasion as the vehicle. The vehicle gets you to the destination—voting

**central route to persuasion** A process in which people think carefully about a message and are influenced by its arguments.

**peripheral route to persuasion** A process in which people do not think carefully about a message and are influenced by superficial cues.

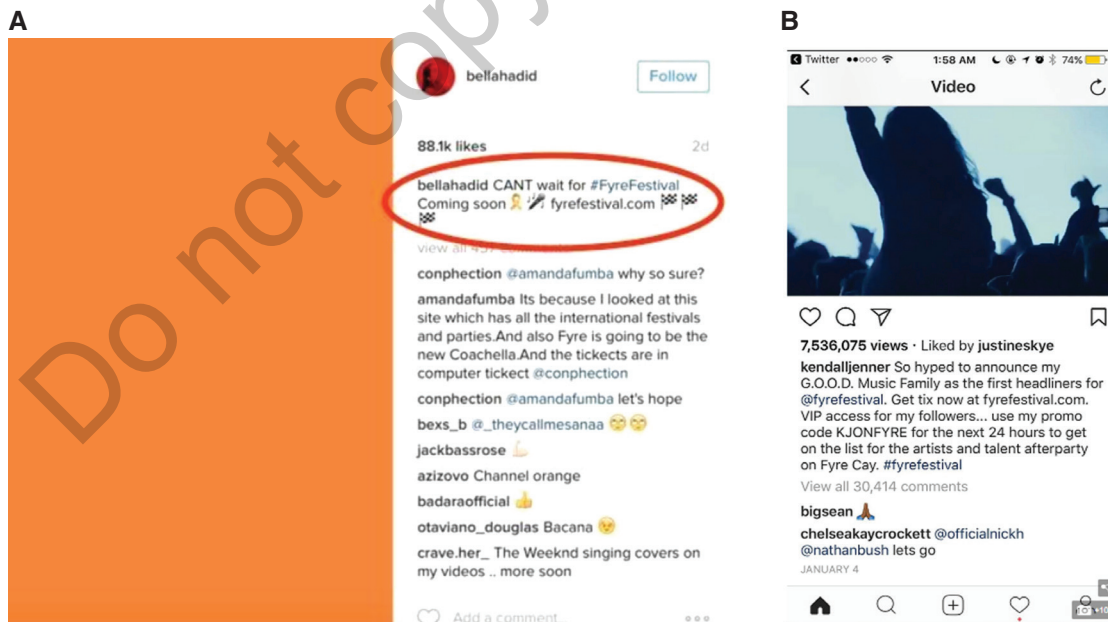


ImagePixel/Shutterstock

People in the United States place a great deal of personal importance on the right to vote. When asked about the importance of five rights and freedoms, the right to vote ranks about as high as any item on the list.

### FIGURE 10.11 Social Influencing

Can attractive sources help sell products and events? Targeting the peripheral route to persuasion, the advertising industry seems to think so (Rahman, 2018). After Fyre Festival, a massive 2017 music festival, was discovered to be fraudulently advertised, influencers and celebrities are highly encouraged to include #ad when they are promoting products and experiences. Bella Hadid and Kendall Jenner were two of the celebrities who promoted the failed Fyre Festival and faced extreme backlash as a result (Cerullo, 2019). This backlash prompted Hadid to release an apology tweet.



Source: Atstock Productions/Shutterstock.

for Katya. A vehicle can get you to this destination of voting for Katya in one of two ways: as the driver (central route) or as the passenger (the peripheral route). The driver is thinking critically about the route, how much pressure to put on the brake, when to turn, and if the traffic lights are green. The passenger is along for the ride. The passenger gets to look at scenery, watch people walking into shops, and play with the radio. Both the driver and passenger get to the same destination—voting for Katya—but in different ways. So, when we are being persuaded to vote, the central route aims for the engaged “driver” with things like statistics and facts, whereas the peripheral route aims for the passive “passenger” with things like emotional appeals and attractive speakers. This two-track model helps to explain how voters, consumers, juries, and other targets of persuasion can seem so logical on some occasions, yet so illogical on others (Petty & Wegener, 1999; SanJosé-Cabezudo et al., 2009), like those duped into the Fyre Festival as described in the Psychology Applied feature.

To understand the conditions that produce change using one route or the other, it’s helpful to view persuasion as the outcome of three factors: a *source* (who), a *message* (says what), and an *audience* (to whom). If a speaker is clear, if the message is relevant and important, and if there is a bright and captive audience that cares deeply about the issues, then that audience will take the effortful central route. But if the source speaks too fast to comprehend, if the message is trivial, or if the audience is distracted, pressed for time, or just not interested, then the less strenuous peripheral route is taken. Particularly important is whether the target audience is personally involved in the issue under consideration, such as a parent who is contemplating their child’s vaccination (Goh & Chi, 2017). High involvement leads us to take the central route; low involvement, the peripheral route (Johnson & Eagly, 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1990). This model is illustrated in Figure 10.12.

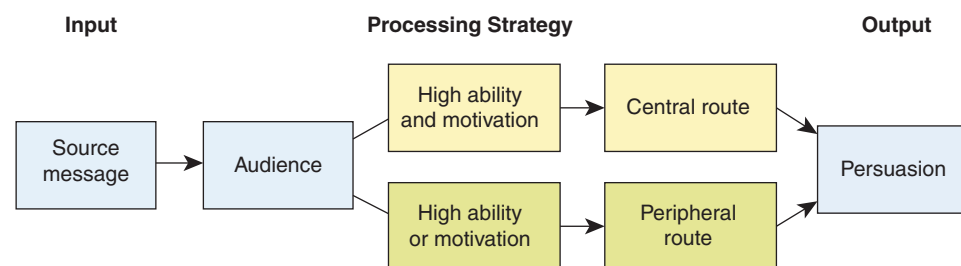
### COGNITIVE DISSONANCE THEORY

Anyone who has ever acted on stage knows how easy it is to become so absorbed in a role that the experience seems real. Forced laughter can make an actor feel happy, and fake tears can turn to sadness. Even in real life, the effect can be dramatic. In 1974, Patty Hearst, a sheltered young college student from a wealthy family, was kidnapped by a revolutionary group. When Hearst was arrested months later, she was carrying a gun and calling herself Tania. How could someone be so totally converted? In Hearst’s own words, “I had thought I was humoring [my captors] by parroting their clichés and buzzwords without believing in them. In trying to convince them I convinced myself.”

The Patty Hearst case reveals the powerful effects of role-playing. Nonetheless, you don’t have to be terrorized to be coaxed into doing something that contradicts your inner convictions. People often engage in attitude-discrepant behavior—as part of a job, for example, or to please others. This raises a profound question: What happens when people behave in ways that do not follow from their attitudes? We know that attitudes influence behavior. But can the causal arrow be reversed? That is, can a forced change in behavior spark a change in attitude?

■ **FIGURE 10.12** Two Routes to Persuasion

Based on aspects of the source, message, and audience, people take either a “central” or a “peripheral” route to persuasion. On the central route, we are influenced by strong arguments and evidence. On the peripheral route, we are influenced more by superficial cues.



Source: Adapted from Kassin, Fein, and Markus (2017).

The answer to this question was provided by Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory. According to Festinger, people hold numerous cognitions about themselves and the world around them—and sometimes these cognitions clash. For example, you say you're on a budget, but all of those products endorsed by celebrities keep popping up in your Instagram feed and suddenly you've spent \$200.00. Or you waited in the rain for hours to see a concert, but when the rain stopped and the band finally took the stage, the entire experience was disappointing. Or you baked under the hot summer sun, even though you knew of the health risks. In each case, there is inconsistency and conflict. You committed yourself to a course of action, but you realize that your behavior contradicts your attitude.

**cognitive dissonance** An unpleasant psychological state often aroused when people behave in ways that are discrepant with their attitudes.

According to Festinger, these kinds of discrepancies often produce an unpleasant state of tension that he called **cognitive dissonance**. Attitude-discrepant behavior doesn't always arouse dissonance. If you broke a diet for a holiday dinner or if you thought that the mousse you ate was low in calories, you would be relatively free of tension. Attitude-discrepant behavior that is performed freely and with knowledge of the consequences, however, does arouse dissonance—and the motivation to reduce it. There are different ways to cope with this unpleasant state. Often the easiest is to change your attitude so that it becomes consistent with your behavior.

To understand dissonance theory, imagine for a moment that you are a participant in the classic study by Festinger and Carlsmith (1959). The experimenter tells you that he is interested in various measures of performance. He hands you a wooden board containing 48 pegs in square holes and asks you to turn each peg to the left, then to the right, then back to the left, and again to the right. The routine seems endless. After 30 minutes, the experimenter comes to your rescue. Or does he? Just when you think things are looking up, he hands you another board and gives you another assignment. For the next half-hour, you are to take 12 spools of thread off the board, put them back on, take them off, and so on. By now, you're just about ready to tear your hair out. As you think back over better times, even the first task begins to look good.

Finally, you've finished. After one of the longest hours of your life, the experimenter lets you in on a secret: There's more to this study than meets the eye. You were in the control group. To test the effects of motivation on performance, the experimenter will tell other participants that the experiment is fun. You don't realize it, but you're being set up for a critical part of the study. Would you tell the next participant that the experiment is enjoyable? Just as you hem and haw, the experimenter offers to pay for your lie. Some participants, like you, are offered a dollar; others, \$20. Before you know it, you're in the waiting room trying to dupe an unsuspecting fellow student.



## What's Your Prediction?

Cognitive dissonance theory makes another interesting prediction: that we will change our attitudes to justify our effort, money spent, time, or suffering. In a classic study, Eliot Aronson and Judson Mills (1959) invited female students to join a discussion group about sex. But first the students had to pass an "embarrassment test." Some underwent a severe test (they had to read obscene passages out loud), others underwent a mild test (they read only mildly erotic words), and still others were admitted without initiation. All passed, only

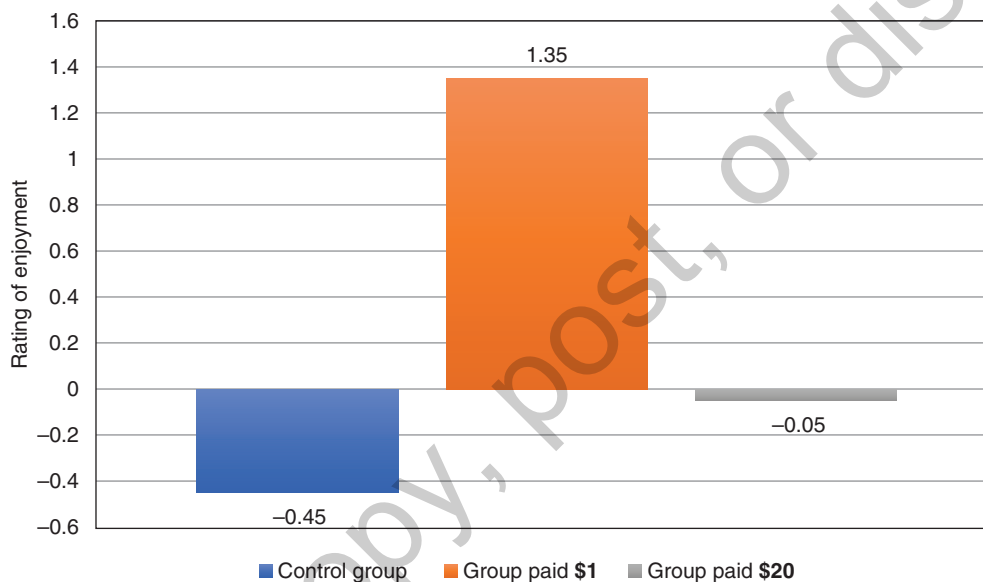
to find that the discussion group was dreadfully boring. Afterward, the women were asked to rate how interesting they found the group. Make a prediction: Who rated the group most interesting: those put through a severe initiation (and had to justify their suffering), mild initiation (creating positive feelings for the group), or no initiation (it was all new to them)? As predicted by dissonance theory, women who endured a severe initiation rated the group as most interesting. Apparently, we have to justify our efforts—leading us to like what we suffer for.

By means of this staged presentation, participants were goaded into an attitude-discrepant behavior, an act that contradicted their private attitudes. They knew the experiment was dull, but they raved. Was cognitive dissonance aroused? It depended on how much participants were paid. Suppose you were one of the lucky ones offered \$20. Even by today's standards, that amount



provides sufficient justification for telling a little white lie. Being well compensated, these participants did not feel dissonance. Now imagine you were offered only \$1. Surely your integrity is worth more than that, don't you think? In this case, you do not have sufficient justification for lying. So you cope by changing your view of the task. If you can convince yourself that the experiment was interesting, then there is no conflict.

When the experiment was presumably over, participants were asked to rate the peg-board tasks. Control-group participants, who did not mislead a confederate, admitted the tasks were boring. So did those in the \$20 condition who had ample justification for what they did. Those paid only \$1, however, rated the tasks as more enjoyable. After engaging in an attitude-discrepant behavior without sufficient justification, these participants felt internally pressured to change their attitudes in order to reduce cognitive dissonance (see Figure 10.13). In an interesting replication of this provocative study, Eddie Harmon-Jones and others (1996) found that participants who were asked to lie about the good taste of a Kool-Aid beverage laced with vinegar later rated that drink as more pleasing to the palette than it actually was.



Source: Festinger, L., & Carlsmith, J. M. (1959).

**FIGURE 10.13**  
Festinger and Carlsmith's Classic Dissonance Study

How interesting is a boring task? Compared to participants who did not have to lie and those paid \$20 to do so, those paid only \$1 later rated the task as more enjoyable. Having engaged in an attitude-discrepant behavior, these latter participants reduced dissonance by changing their attitude.

## Psychology Applied

### HOW PERSUASION FUELED THE FYRE FESTIVAL

#FyreFestival. The exclusive music festival, tailored toward millennials, was backed by a gorgeous island in the Bahamas, public appearances by Ja Rule, and an entrepreneurial genius named Billy McFarland. Behind him was a team of software engineers, stacks of credit cards, the world's most beautiful supermodels, and a team of approximately 400 influencers whose posts reached an audience of at least 300 million (Talbot,

2019). The media storm was so successful that tickets sold out within hours. It was destined to be the most incredible and luxurious music festival there ever was. Until it wasn't.

Unbeknownst to ticket-holders, the island could not sustain thousands of people. Luxury housing became hurricane relief tents, soaked by the rain, and

*(Continued)*

(Continued)

furnished with inflatable mattresses. Catered meals became two pieces of bread with cheese and a salad. In a matter of hours, Fyre Festival evolved into the joke of the year. Those who actually arrived to the festival site went into a panic and began looting whatever they could get their hands on. Billy and his team, out of fear for their lives, had to flee the Bahamas, leaving behind thousands of angry patrons and unpaid workers.



Ollie Millington/Contributor/Getty Images

In the Netflix documentary, *FYRE: The Greatest Party That Never Happened* (Jerry Media & Smith, 2019), an employee of Billy McFarland's talks about the irony in how 400 influencers and a team of bikini-clad supermodels made the unknown music festival an overnight success. It went on to become a laughing-stock and punch line for jokes after it failed to live up to the hype.

How could so many people be persuaded to invest their resources and careers on an unknown music festival? Cialdini's (2009) theory of persuasion explains this phenomenon quite well. In summary, if we are to be persuaded, we look for certain traits. These traits include authority, likeability, reciprocity, consistency, consensus, and scarcity. Billy and the team that built Fyre Festival had all of

these traits. One trait in particular is consensus. Fyre Festival became so popular that it lent itself to what is now called FOMO, or fear of missing out. "FOMO is characterized by the desire to stay continually connected with what others are doing" (Przybylski et al., 2013, p. 1841). We want to make choices that others support and are a part of. The principle of scarcity also connects with FOMO. We don't want to miss out on something that might be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. As a young professional at Fyre Media, you can imagine the desire to be a part of something rare that could easily make your career. As a ticket-holder, you can imagine the desire to be at the exclusive Fyre Festival with your friends, making memories that will last a lifetime. Last, think about the knowledge of having something that everybody wants, but only you get. The harder it is to own, the more it is worth. With so few tickets and housing options available, purchasers surely felt they had to get what they could while they could. Unfortunately, Fyre Festival investments did not pay off. In some instances, people were left in debt. Will ticket-holders ever see a reimbursement? Will Billy's former employees receive wages for their work? What about the Bahamians who went into debt to feed and shelter Billy's employees? These answers are uncertain, but important lessons have been learned about social media and persuasion. In future posts made by celebrities and influencers, look for #ad and remember that sometimes missing out is a good thing. The people who were stranded at Fyre Festival and never saw a return on their investment would probably agree.



Mark Lennihan/Associated Press

Fyre Festival was not Billy McFarland's only attempt at fraud. In total, investors and customers lost \$26 million as a result of his various schemes. McFarland was convicted of fraud in 2018 and sentenced to 6 years, a lenient sentence requested by his attorneys due to his "mental health issues" (Madani, 2018).

## Group Processes

When individuals assemble in groups, profound changes sometimes take place. Examples include the random violence and vandalism of street gangs, avid sports fans who scream at the top of their lungs and sometimes riot after victory, high-powered corporate groups that make

unusually risky decisions, and angry and militant mobs seeking revenge. It's as if the group casts a spell over the individuals who compose it.

### SOCIAL FACILITATION

How does the mere presence of others affect behavior? Appropriately, this most basic question in social psychology was also the first to be tested. In 1898, Triplett studied bicycle-racing records and discovered that the cyclists were faster when they competed alongside others than when they pedaled alone against the clock. Intrigued by this finding, Triplett had 40 children simply wind a fishing reel—sometimes alone, other times in pairs. Again, performance was faster among those who worked together than alone. Triplett's conclusion: The presence of others triggers “nervous energy,” thereby enhancing performance.

Subsequently, many researchers confirmed that the presence of others speeds up performance on various cognitive and motor tasks (even ants excavate more and chickens eat more when they are in the company of other members of their species). At the same time, however, other researchers were observing performance declines. Why did the presence of others have such different effects on task performance? In 1965, Zajonc solved the problem. He noted that (1) the presence of others increases arousal, and (2) arousal enhances the “dominant” response—that is, whatever response is most likely to occur. Zajonc reasoned that the dominant response is more likely to be the correct one when a task is easy (such as adding two numbers) but to be incorrect when the task is more difficult (such as solving a complex equation). The presence of other people should thus improve our performance on simple tasks but impair performance on tasks that are difficult. To demonstrate, Zajonc found that participants who tried to memorize simple word associations (*mother—father*) performed better in the presence of others than alone, but those who tried to learn difficult associations (*mother—algebra*) did worse. This phenomenon is called **social facilitation** (see Figure 10.14).

### SOCIAL LOAFING

Social facilitation effects are found for *individual* tasks such as running a race, solving a problem, or memorizing a word list. In these types of activities, one's own performance is easy to identify. What about cooperative *joint* activities where individual contributions are pooled? In a tug-of-war, say, or in a cooperative class project, does each person exert more effort when they participate as part of a team or alone? To find out, Ingham and others (1974) asked blindfolded participants to pull on a rope “as hard as you can” and found that participants pulled 18% harder when they knew they were alone than when they thought that three other participants were pulling with them. Latané and others (1979) then asked participants to clap or cheer “as loud as you can”—either alone or in groups of two, four, or six. The result: As individuals, participants produced less noise when they thought they were part of a group than when they thought they were alone.

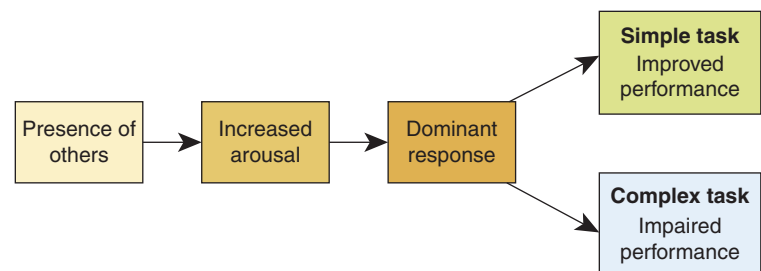
The Latané team (1979) coined the term **social loafing** to describe this group-produced reduction in individual effort. As illustrated in Figure 10.15, social loafing increases with group size: The more others there are, the less effort each individual participant exerts. In the clapping and cheering study, for example, two-person groups performed at only 71% of their individual capacity, four-person groups at 51%, and six-person groups at 40%. Why do people slack off when others are there to pick up the slack? There are a few reasons. One is that people see their own contribution as

**social facilitation** The tendency for the presence of others to enhance performance on simple tasks and impair performance on complex tasks.

**social loafing** The tendency for people to exert less effort in group tasks for which individual contributions are pooled.

■ FIGURE 10.14 Social Facilitation

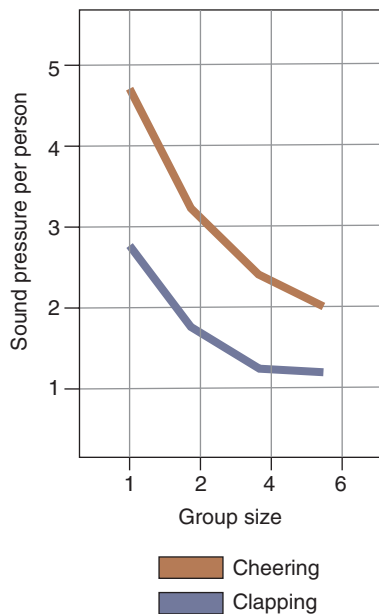
Zajonc theorized that the mere presence of others increases our arousal, which strengthens the “dominant” response. As a result, the presence of others improves performance on simple tasks but impairs performance on tasks that are complex.





### FIGURE 10.15 Social Loafing

Participants were told to clap or cheer “as loud as you can”—either alone or in groups of two, four, or six. The more others there were, the less effort was exerted by each individual participant (Latané et al., 1979).



Source: Latané, B., Williams, K., & Harkins, S. (1979). Many hands make light the work: The causes and consequences of social loafing. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37(6), 822–832. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.37.6.822>.

unessential to the group’s success. A second is that people are less concerned about being personally evaluated—in part because individual performance standards within a group are unclear. A third possibility is that people slack off in order to guard against looking like the “sucker” who works harder than everyone else. Putting all the pieces together, researchers have concluded that social loafing occurs because individuals often do not see the connection between their own effort and the desired outcome (Sheppard, 1993). Remember this the next time you have a group assignment!

## Social Relations

### 10.3 Contrast variables that increase helping and aggressive behavior.

- Determine the types of aversive events that predispose people to behave aggressively.
- Contrast aggression with altruism.
- List situational factors that influence helping behavior.

People relate to one another in different ways. Sometimes our interactions and the decisions we make are negative, hostile, and antisocial. At other times, we are helpful, charitable, and prosocial in our behavior. Let’s examine these two contrasting tendencies and the situations that bring them out in us.

## Aggression

On a Portland MAX train in May 2017, Jeremy Joseph Christian verbally attacked two women with ethnic and religious slurs (Haag & Fortin, 2017). Three innocent witnesses intervened—Ricky John Best, Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche, and Micah David-Cole Fletcher. In a violent response, Jeremy attacked these three men with a knife. Sadly, Ricky and Taliesin died of their stab wounds. In an incident at YouTube headquarters in April 2018, a popular animal rights activist and vlogger, Nasim Najafi Aghdam, opened fire on the employees (Thanawala & Nakashima, 2018). According to sources, she was furious that YouTube had censored her videos. That same month, another woman, Jordan Worth, made history. Jordan was an honors graduate from University of Hertfordshire who volunteered to raise funds for sheltered pets and neglected children in Africa. But her petite frame, loving Facebook posts, and charity work cleverly disguised a horrendous secret. For years, she had tortured her boyfriend and the father of her children, Alex Skeel. The torture was so brutal, police found Alex with seriously infected burns, stab wounds, severe malnutrition, and fluid buildup in his skull from head trauma. Alex was days away from death when police intervened. In April 2018, Jordan became the first woman in the United Kingdom prosecuted for coercive control and was sentenced to serve 7.5 years in prison (“Alex Skeel,” 2018). These examples serve as a sad reminder that human aggression is everywhere. From domestic terrorism to the violent episodes of road rage that flare up on highways to cyberbullying, the list of violent incidents seems endless.

In some ways, these acts are so deviant that they shed little light on “normal” human nature. After all, if you think about the number of opportunities we have every day to inflict harm, we more often than not choose to keep the peace. We sit in idle cars when crosswalks are occupied, hold doors open so others can easily pass, and move to the right of escalators so those in a hurry can safely hustle to their destination. However, these examples of violence serve to remind us that **aggression**—behavior that is intended to inflict harm on someone motivated to avoid it—is a common and contagious social disease. Every day, people all over the world are victims of wars

**aggression** Behavior intended to inflict harm on someone who is motivated to avoid it.

between nations, conflicts between ethnic and religious groups, racism, street gangs, drug dealers, sexual assaults, intimate violence, and police brutality. Aggression is so prevalent that psychologists have desperately tried to pinpoint its origins. Some argue that aggression is programmed into human nature by instincts, genes, hormones, and other biological factors. Others emphasize the role of culture, social learning, and environmental stressors. As always, human behavior is not the product of either nature or nurture but the interaction of many factors (Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Berkowitz, 1993).

### BIOLOGICAL ROOTS

Human aggression is subject to biological influences (Ball et al., 2008; Renfrew, 1997; Silberg et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2018). Twin and adoption studies have suggested that genetic factors play a role, though it's not clear how large that role is (Coccaro et al., 2018; DiLalla & Gottesman, 1991; Mann et al., 2017; Miles & Carey, 1997). There are also consistent sex differences in aggression. Among children and adolescents, boys are more physically aggressive than girls in the way they play and fight (Loeber & Hay, 1997), with these differences appearing in early childhood (Alink et al., 2006; Baillargeon et al., 2007). Similarly, among adults, men behave more aggressively in laboratory experiments than women (Bettencourt & Miller, 1996; Eagly & Steffen, 1986). In every country that has kept criminal records, men commit more violent crimes than women. According to the FBI, the ratio of male to female murderers in the United States is about 10 to 1.

What explains the sex difference in direct physical aggression? One possibility is that aggression is linked to the male sex hormone testosterone. Although both men and women have testosterone, men have higher levels on average than women do. What is the effect? In rats, mice, cattle (Needham et al., 2017), and other animals, injections of testosterone increase levels of aggression, whereas castration, which lowers testosterone, has the opposite effect (Breuer et al., 2001). In humans, correlational studies show that people with high levels of testosterone tend to be bold, courageous, energetic, competitive, rambunctious, and, yes, aggressive (Dabbs, 2000).

### AVERSIVE STIMULATION

Aggression may have biological roots, but it is also learned from experience and then is triggered by factors in the environment. Put two rats in a cage together, subject them to painful shocks, loud noise, or intense heat, and a fight is likely to break out. Put people together in unpleasant conditions—overcrowded living quarters, intense heat, a noisy construction site, a room filled with cigarette smoke, the stench of body odor, or the company of an obnoxious coworker—and they too become more likely to lash out. As a general rule, aversive stimulation sparks aggression (Berkowitz, 1983).

One type of aversive event that we all experience at times is frustration. In 1939, John Dollard and others proposed the hypothesis that frustration leads to aggression either against the source of frustration or against an innocent but vulnerable substitute, or scapegoat. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, this frequently occurs on highways and city streets, where motorists obstructed by traffic scream, honk, tailgate, and hurl obscene gestures at other drivers, as they erupt in fits of “road rage.” The effects of frustration are exhibited by passengers in the not-so-friendly skies of commercial airlines, where long lines, cramped spaces, schedule delays, overbooked planes, stale air, and battles for the armrest have frayed nerves and increased incidents of “air rage,” often directed at flight attendants (Morgan & Nickson, 2001; Zoroya, 1999).



LightFieldStudios/Stock

Contrary to the stereotype, women can be physically abusive. Men, too, can be victims of intimate partner abuse. Gender does not protect anyone from victimization.

**frustration-aggression hypothesis** The theory that frustration causes aggression.

Testing the implications of this **frustration-aggression hypothesis**, Hovland and Sears (1940) examined the link between economic hard times and racial violence. They analyzed records from 14 southern states during the years 1882 to 1930 and discovered a strong negative correlation between the value of cotton and lynchings: As the price of cotton fell, the number of lynchings increased. Although this correlation cannot be interpreted in causal terms, experiments have confirmed that frustration sparks aggression by arousing anger, fear, and other negative emotions (Berkowitz, 1989). Staub (1996) believes that historical acts of genocide—as in the Holocaust of World War II—often stem from societal frustration, poor economic conditions, and the need to find a scapegoat. A meta-analysis of 49 studies showed that people who are frustrated do, at times, *displace* their aggression by lashing out against innocent others (Marcus-Newhall et al., 2000). For example, Twenge and others (2001) found that college students who experienced social exclusion from a research group later reacted more aggressively toward a critical fellow student. In another study on exclusion, Chow and colleagues (2008) experimentally manipulated rejection in a virtual dodge ball game. The researchers found that those participants who felt angry as a result of exclusion were more likely to engage in antisocial behaviors.

Climate can also seem to spark violence. Correlational analyses of worldwide weather records and crime statistics reveal a strong link between climate and aggression. Mares (2013) conducted an analysis on 20 years of climatic and crime data for St. Louis, Missouri, to determine if climate change correlated with violence in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods. Mares found that neighborhoods with more socioeconomic disadvantages had a greater likelihood of experiencing violence when temperatures were warm. Taking this climatic and violence connection further, Hsiang and colleagues (2013) conducted a meta-analysis of 60 studies to determine if climate change correlated with human conflicts. Their results demonstrated a strong link between the two; with warmer temperatures or more extreme rainfall came a 4% increase in interpersonal violence and a 14% increase in intergroup conflict.

### SITUATIONAL CUES

Frustration, extreme heat, and other aversive events predispose us to aggression by arousing negative affect. Once we are in this state of readiness, the presence of people and objects associated with aggression may then prompt us to act on this predisposition. Aversive events “load the gun,” so to speak, but situational cues get us to “pull the trigger.” What situational cues have this effect?

**Weapons.** The sights and sounds of violence are everywhere. In the United States, millions of adults own handguns. Daily TV news reports flood us not only with graphic images of street violence but also with talk of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons of mass destruction. Does any of this matter? Yes. According to Berkowitz, the mere sight of an aggressive stimulus can influence behavior. In a classic demonstration of this point, Berkowitz and LePage (1967) had male participants administer electric shocks to a confederate who had insulted half the participants right before the session. In one condition, only the shock-generating apparatus was present in the lab. In a second condition, a .38-caliber pistol and a 12-gauge shotgun were on the table near the shock button—supposedly left from an earlier previous experiment. As measured by the number of shocks given, aggression was increased by the sight of these guns. Participants who were angered and primed to be aggressive retaliated more in the presence of the weapons than in their absence.

This provocative “weapons effect” has been observed across 56 experiments (Benjamin et al., 2017). For example, Anderson and colleagues (1998) presented participants with pictures of weapons or plants and then recorded the amount of time it took those participants to read aloud as quickly as possible various words flashed on a screen. The result: After seeing images of weapons as opposed to plants, participants were quicker to read aggression-related words such as *punch, choke, butcher, and shoot*.

Why do images of weapons have this impact on reading speed? Weapons are commonly associated with violence, so the mere sight of a pistol, club, or sword automatically brings aggression-related thoughts to mind. Anderson and Bushman’s (2002) General Aggression Model



(GAM) provides a way for us to understand the progression of events. The GAM has two types of input—personal (gender, age, genetics, values) and situational (media exposure, frustration, provocation, climate, alcohol). One type of input is not necessarily more important than the other. Say there are two people, a hunter and a nonhunter, in the exact same situation—they are standing in a room and there is an assault gun on the table. Would their perception of the gun differ because of personal traits? Bartholow and colleagues (2005) did a study looking at differences in reactions to images of weapons between hunters and nonhunters. Sure enough, hunters' and nonhunters' reactions differed depending on the type of gun. Assault guns were more likely to cue aggression in hunters and hunting guns were more likely to cue aggression in nonhunters. Personal factors can make a difference.

Personal and situational factors then have an impact on the person's internal state. The internal state includes emotions, thought processes, and arousal. Next, the person appraises the situation and makes decisions. Finally, there is a behavioral outcome. The behavioral outcome brings us to this question: Do guns kill, or are people the problem? After all, a person has to pull the trigger.

**Media Violence.** As if reality did not provide enough of a stimulus, the entertainment industry adds fuel to the fire. Estimates suggest that there are 2.3 television sets per American household (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2015). Add to that cell phones, computers, and tablets and you have several opportunities to observe violence. Over the years, analyses of television shows have revealed what you might suspect: depictions of violence are common in news shows, movies, TV dramas, music videos, commercials, and, worst of all, children's cartoons—where heroes, villains, and other creatures fight dozens of battles an hour. Research has shown that roughly 60% of all programs contain some violence. What's worse, the perpetrators are often “good guys,” the context is often humorous, the violence is almost never punished, and it is seldom depicted as bloody, painful, or harmful in the long run (Wilson et al., 1998).

Does exposure to TV violence promote aggression? Literally hundreds of studies have addressed this important question, with alarming results (Bushman, 2016). Correlational studies reveal a link between the amount of TV violence watched by young boys and their subsequent level of aggression—a link commonly observed in the United States and Europe (Geen & Donnerstein, 1998; Huesmann & Eron, 1986). In a longitudinal development study, for example, Eron (1987) found that a boy's exposure to TV violence at 8 years of age predicted criminal activity 22 years later. Violent video games have also been connected with delinquent behaviors (Exelmans et al., 2015). Critics are quick to note that we cannot draw conclusions about cause and effect from these correlations (Bender et al., 2018). Perhaps exposure to violent media causes aggression, as it seems, or perhaps aggressiveness causes children to seek out violent media, or perhaps poverty and other external conditions cause the tendency both to watch and to commit acts of aggression (Freedman, 1988). A meta-analysis of 37 studies on violent media and hostile appraisals found significant connections between violent media consumption and how hostile the participants viewed the world (Bushman, 2016). In turn, those who view the world as hostile are more prone to behave aggressively (Bushman, 2016). Whatever the explanation, the link between TV violence exposure and aggressive behavior is almost as strong as the correlation between cigarette smoking and lung cancer (Bushman & Huesmann, 2001).

To pin down cause and effect, researchers have observed participants who are randomly assigned to watch violent or nonviolent events. Controlled laboratory studies of this sort show that exposure to aggressive models, either live or on film, has negative effects. In the first of these experiments, Bandura and others (1961) found that preschool children were more likely to attack an inflated doll after watching an



Studies have linked engaging in virtual aggressive behaviors with exhibiting aggression in real life.

Evgeniy/Shkolenko/Stock



Albert Bandura

Observing violent models, whether in video games or on screen, may increase aggression in children. This image of a child acting violently toward a toy is taken from Bandura's classic study.

aggressive adult model than after watching a nonaggressive adult model. In a similar experiment, Dillon and Bushman (2017) randomly assigned children to one of two film viewing conditions: one PG-rated film clip where characters can be seen with guns or one clip without guns. After viewing the film clip, the children played in a room for 20 minutes. A real (but disabled) gun with a trigger sensor was available in the room for the children to handle. The median number of trigger pulls for children who saw the film clip with guns was 2.8 compared to 0.01 for children who did not see the gun-containing film clip. Children who watched the gun-containing film clip spent 53.1 seconds holding the gun, whereas children who did not watch the gun-containing film clip held the gun for 11.1 seconds. Dillon and Bushman (2017) concluded that children who observe movie characters using guns have a higher probability of using guns themselves. The common finding for these studies is that among children and adolescents,

exposure to violent models increases aggression—not just in laboratories but also in classrooms, playgrounds, and other settings (Wood et al., 1991).

### Altruism

While situations like climate can increase aggression, they can also reveal humans behaving at their best. The United States has experienced many tragic natural disasters, and according to climate change experts, these natural disasters won't be happening with less frequency. In 2017, Hurricane Harvey hit Houston with no mercy. The vicious downpour and high winds drowned areas of the highly populated city, resulting in the displacement of tens of thousands of residents. People were floating on pool toys, sitting on roofs, and swimming in debris-laden waters desperate to be rescued. One man, Dr. Stephen Kimmel, watched helplessly as his home flooded... until he received a call about Jacob Terrazes.

Jacob Terrazes was a teenager in great need of immediate surgery (Squitieri, 2017). But on this day, getting to a hospital for such a procedure seemed near impossible. In waist-high floodwater, Dr. Kimmel set his mind to making the impossible possible. A volunteer fire department assisted Dr. Kimmel via canoe and pickup truck on an hour-long journey to rescue Jacob. Dr. Kimmel and the team of firefighters successfully retrieved Jacob and got him to a hospital. Once they arrived safely, Dr. Kimmel performed the surgery. In an interview with CNN about his heroism, the surgeon humbly responded, "It's great to take care of kids and see them get better" (Squitieri, 2017).

Stories of raw heroism are everywhere. During the tragic collapse of the World Trade Center towers, firefighters without hesitation climbed *up* the twin buildings—many to their own deaths—to rescue their fellow humans who were trapped (Smith, 2002). From the horrors of Nazi Germany came a number of heroic stories about German citizens who risked their lives to hide their Jewish friends and neighbors (Schneider, 2000). Why did all these heroes try to rescue those in need? Why do some people faced with a crisis not intervene?



ALEX EDELMAN/Contributor/Getty Images

There are many displays of heroism during crisis. Here, a firefighter holds on to two nursing home patients while a member of the "Cajun Navy" drives his truck during the evacuation of a nursing home due to rising flood waters in Lumberton, North Carolina, on September 15, 2018 in the wake of Hurricane Florence. Besides federal and state emergency crews, rescuers were being helped by volunteers from the Cajun Navy, civilians equipped with light boats, canoes, and air mattresses, who arrived in Houston during Hurricane Harvey to carry out water rescues.

Focusing on prosocial aspects of human interaction, many social psychologists study **altruism**, helping behavior that is motivated primarily by a desire to benefit a person other than oneself. When people are asked to list instances of helping in their own lives, they cite helping a classmate with homework, listening to a friend's problems, giving moral support, giving rides, and so on (McGuire, 1994). Everyday examples are not hard to find. Yet psychologists ask: Does altruism really exist, or is helping always selfishly motivated? And why do we sometimes fail to come to the aid of someone who needs it? These are just some of the puzzling questions asked about helping and the factors that influence it (Barclay, 2010; Batson, 1998; Farrelly et al., 2007, 2016; Schroeder et al., 1995).

**altruism** Helping behavior that is motivated primarily by a desire to benefit others, not oneself.

### BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

This debate about human nature is fascinating. What inspired social psychologists to study helping in the first place? It was hair-raising news stories about bystanders who failed to take action even when someone's life was in danger. The problem first made headlines in March 1964. The March 27, 1964 *New York Times* headline read "37 Who Saw Murder Didn't Call Police" (Gansberg, 1964). It was the sensationalized story of Kitty Genovese, who was walking home from work in Queens, New York, at 3:20 in the morning. As she crossed the street from her car to her apartment, a man with a knife appeared. She ran, but he caught up and stabbed her. She cried frantically for help and screamed, "Oh my God, he stabbed me! . . . I'm dying, I'm dying!"—but to no avail. The man fled but then returned, raped her, and stabbed her eight more times, until she was dead. Reporters claimed that regardless of the number of people within earshot of Kitty's screams, no one attempted to help her. We now know that is not entirely true (Manning et al., 2007). There were attempts to help her; people did call the police. However, the sensationalism of the story grabbed readers' attention, and rightfully so. Bibb Latané and John Darley were two of those readers, and they decided to do something about it. They demonstrated that this type of nonhelping response, as reported in the *New York Times*, should—and could—be studied.

Unlike the newspaper article, Latané and Darley (1970) refrained from blaming the bystanders and instead focused on the social factors at work in these types of situations. In a series of important experiments, they staged emergencies, varied the conditions, and observed what happened. In one study, Darley and Latané (1968) took participants to a cubicle and asked them to discuss the kinds of adjustment problems that college students face. They were told that for confidentiality purposes, participants would communicate over an intercom system and the experimenter would not be listening. The participants were also told to speak one at a time and to take turns. Some were assigned to two-person discussions, others to larger groups. Although the opening moments were uneventful, one participant (an accomplice) mentioned in passing that he had a seizure disorder that was triggered by pressure. Sure enough, when it came his turn to speak again, this participant struggled and pleaded for help:

I could really-er-use some help so if somebody would-er-give me a little...  
h-help-uh-er-er-er . . . c-could . . . somebody-er-er-help-er-uh-uh-uh (choking  
sounds)... I'm gonna die-er-er-I'm . . . gonna die-er-help-er-er-seizure-er.

If you were in this situation, how would you react? Would you stop the experiment, dash out of your cubicle, and seek out the experimenter? As it turned out, the response was strongly influenced by the size of the group. Actually, all participants participated alone, but they were led to believe that others were present and that there was a real crisis. Almost all participants who thought they were in a two-person discussion left the room for help immediately. In the larger "groups," however, participants were less likely to intervene and were slower to do so when they did. In fact, the larger the group was supposed to be, the less helping occurred (see Figure 10.16). This pattern of results was labeled the **bystander effect**: The more bystanders there are, the less likely a victim is to get help. In an emergency, the presence of others paradoxically inhibits helping.

**bystander effect** The finding that the presence of others inhibits helping in an emergency.



**diffusion of responsibility** In groups, a tendency for bystanders to assume that someone else will help.

At first, this pioneering research seemed to defy all common sense. Isn't there safety in numbers? Don't we feel more secure rushing in to help when others are there for support? To understand fully what went wrong, Latané and Darley (1970) provided a careful, step-by-step analysis of the decision-making process in emergency situations. According to their scheme, bystanders help only when they *notice* the event, *interpret* it as an emergency, *take responsibility* for helping, *decide* to intervene, and then *act* on that decision (see Figure 10.17).

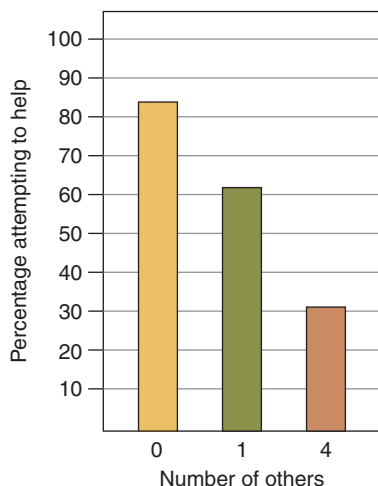
This analysis of the intervention process sheds light on the bystander effect, in that the presence of others can inhibit helping at each of the five steps. Consider, for example, the second requirement, that bystanders interpret an event as an emergency. Have you ever heard screaming from a nearby house and the sound of crashing objects, only to wonder if you were overhearing an assault or just a family quarrel? Cries of pain may sound like shrieks of laughter, and heart-attack victims may be mistaken for drunk. How do other bystanders influence our interpretation? Faced with a sudden, possibly dangerous event, everyone pretends to stay calm. As each person realizes that others seem indifferent, they shrug it off. As a result, the event no longer feels like an emergency.

Latané and Darley (1970) observed this process in their study, which had participants fill out questionnaires alone or in groups of three. After the experimenter left, white smoke was pumped into the room through a vent. Alone, most participants worried that there was a fire and quickly reported the smoke to the experimenter. Yet in the company of others, most participants did not seek help. In some groups, the smoke was so thick that participants rubbed their eyes and waved fumes away from their face as they worked on the questionnaires, but they did not call for help. Why not? In postexperiment interviews, they said they assumed the smoke was harmless steam, air-conditioning vapor, or even "truth gas"—but not a fire.

The presence of others also inhibits helping by causing a **diffusion of responsibility**, a belief that others will intervene. This is what most likely happened in the case of Hugo Alfredo Tale-Yax, a story eerily similar to the one published about Kitty. But

### FIGURE 10.16 The Bystander Effect

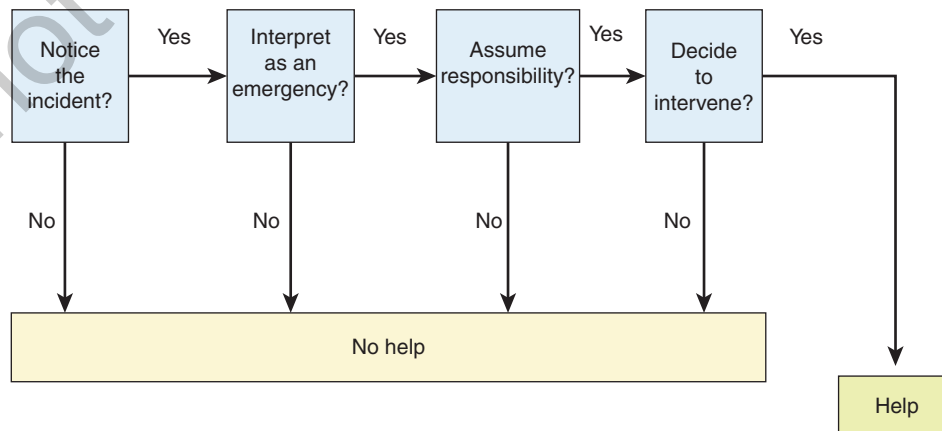
When participants thought that they alone heard a seizure victim in need, the vast majority sought help. As the number of bystanders increased, however, they became less likely to intervene (Darley & Latané, 1968).



Source: Adapted from Darley, J. M., & Latane, B. (1968). Bystander intervention in emergencies: Diffusion of responsibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 8(4, Pt.1), 377–383. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0025589>.

### FIGURE 10.17 A Model of Bystander Intervention

This step-by-step analysis suggests several reasons for the fact that bystanders often do not help in emergencies.



this story, unlike Kitty's, was caught on video surveillance. Hugo's story begins with heroism and ends in an avoidable tragedy. Hugo was a homeless man living in Queens, New York, who witnessed a mugging. Hugo, an unsuspected hero, jumped into the fray to rescue the female victim. During the struggle with the mugger, the woman ran away but Hugo was stabbed multiple times (Hutchinson, 2010). As he lay on the street dying from his wounds, 20 people walked by without calling police or attempting to get Hugo help. In fact, camera footage shows one man taking a picture of the dying Hugo, while another rolls him over and then walks away.

Person after person walked by Hugo, and the number of people who passed him by increased as the morning matured. You would think that with so many people in the area, Hugo would get the help he desperately needed. Sadly, this was not the case. By the time emergency responders finally arrived to Hugo's aid, he was already dead. As predicted by laboratory research, psychologists have confirmed that individuals working in groups diffuse the responsibility for their collective performance, with each member assuming less responsibility as the number of others present increases from two to eight (Forsyth et al., 2002). The people who continued to pass by Hugo probably thought, "Surely someone else has done something to help this man."

The bystander effect is powerful and scary. Over the years, researchers have observed behavior in different kinds of staged crises. Would participants stop for a stranded motorist, help a person who faints or sprains an ankle, or try to break up a fight? Would they rush to the aid of a seizure victim, a subway passenger who staggers and falls to the ground, or an experimenter having an asthma attack? What are the odds that a person in need will actually receive help? Clearly, helping depends in complex ways on various characteristics of the victim, the bystanders, and the situation (see Table 10.1). The fact remains, however, that a person is less likely to intervene in a group than when alone. Even more remarkable is that victims are more likely to get help from someone when their welfare rests on the shoulders of a single potential helper than when many others are present (Latané & Nida, 1981).



Christopher Sadowski/Splash News/News.com

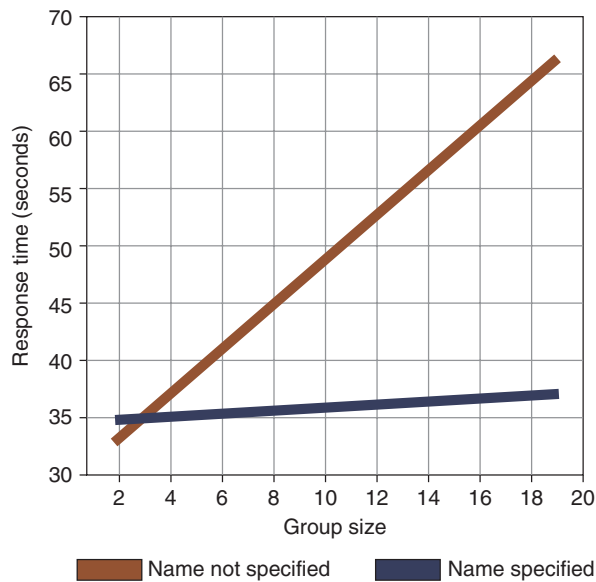
Hugo Tale-Yax gave his life to save a woman from a mugging. However, his good deed was not reciprocated. After 20 bystanders passed him by, Hugo's untreated stab wounds resulted in his death. In these situations, we can convince ourselves that someone has already helped, help is on the way, or that we don't know how to help. These thoughts contribute to the bystander effect and can be the difference between life and death.

**Table 10.1** When Helping Is Most Likely to Occur

1. When the bystander is in a good mood	
2. When the bystander feels guilty or needs a self-esteem boost	
3. When the bystander observes someone else helping	
4. When the bystander is not pressed for time	
5. When the bystander is male and the victim female	
6. When the victim makes a direct request for help	
7. When the victim is physically attractive	
8. When the victim appears to deserve help	
9. When the victim is similar in some way to the bystander	
10. In a small town or rural area, not a large city	

### FIGURE 10.18 Cyberhelping

In this study, individuals participating in an online chat room saw a plea for help. Illustrating the bystander effect, the more others thought to be present, the slower people were to respond. If the individual's name was identified in the request for help, however, the inhibiting effect of other bystanders on helping was eliminated.



If ever you are in need of help in public, is there anything you can do to get someone to step out from the shadow of the crowd? Consider the necessary steps to intervention, and you will see that a person in need should draw attention to himself or herself, make it clear that help is needed, and single out an individual bystander—through eye contact, by pointing, or even by making a direct request.

What if you need help in cyberspace? In the first extension of Latané and Darley's research to "cyberhelping," a plea for help was made to nearly 5,000 participants in some 400 Internet chat rooms. As shown in Figure 10.18, the more others that were assumed to be online, the slower the participants were to help. When the person in need addressed participants by name, however, the bystander effect was eliminated. In this case, the helping response was quick—regardless of how many others were supposedly in the chat room (Markey, 2000).

Similar results have been found in other cyber mediums such as private e-mail requests (Barron & Yechiam, 2002) and public discussion forums (Voelpel et al., 2008). Interestingly, Barron and Yechiam's (2002) study found that private e-mails sent to one recipient were more likely to initiate assistance in comparison to private e-mails sent

to five recipients. Furthermore, Voelpel and colleagues (2008) discovered the same diffusion of responsibility trend; smaller discussion forums increased the likelihood of helping, whereas larger discussion forums decreased it.

However, research on altruism in cyberspace has its snafus. Not every attempt at replicating diffusion of responsibility has worked perfectly (Fischer et al., 2011). Some critics argue that when we see someone in need on the Internet, the need could be past the fact. For example, when scrolling through your Twitter feed, you may notice a comment from someone asking for advice or the location of a particular resource, but that comment was posted 3 hours ago. Others point out the fact that the number of bystanders might be ignored, unknown, or too high (Allison & Bussey, 2016). Regardless, people on the Internet do need help and often get ignored, which can have devastating effects in cases of cyberbullying (Cassidy et al., 2013).

### LEARNING CHECK

#### Social Relations

Fill in the blanks by selecting the word that best fits from the accompanying list of words. (Note: There are more choices than there are answers.)

less size summer	testosterone increases decreases	aggression instinct frustration theft	full moon more winter
1. _____, a hormone more prominent in males, has been correlated with aggression.			
2. _____ is one type of aversive event experienced by most people.			
3. More violent crimes occur during the _____.			
4. Aggression _____ when guns are in the room.			
5. The more bystanders there are, the _____ likely a victim is to get help.			

(Answers: 1. testosterone; 2. frustration; 3. summer; 4. increases; 5. less)



## Cross-Cultural Perspectives

### 10.4 Appraise the contribution culture makes to our perception of the world and others.

- Evaluate how cultures influence the way people see themselves in relation to others.
- Define individualism and collectivism, and determine how cultures differ on this dimension.
- Explain the environment's role in our self-conceptions.

The similarities among us are so self-evident that they are invisible, taken for granted (Figure 10.19). Despite the “universals” of human behavior, there are some differences—both *among* cultures and between racial and ethnic groups *within* cultures. Immersed in our own ways of life, we can all too easily overlook an important fact: There is no dominant world culture. The most populous country is China at 1,384,688,986 people, followed by India at 1,296,834,042 people, and then the United States at 329,256,465 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Although we are referred to as “the melting pot,” the United States isn’t even close to being called home by a billion people, whereas China and India surpass that number of citizens by millions.

We humans are a heterogeneous lot. As a matter of *geography*, some of us live in large, heavily populated cities, whereas others live in small towns, affluent suburbs, rural farming or fishing communities, hot and humid jungles, expansive deserts, high-altitude mountains, tropical islands, and icy arctic plains. Ethnologue (n.d.) states that there are over 7,000 languages spoken, including Chinese, English, Hindi, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Malay, Bengali, Portuguese, French, German, and Japanese. There are also hundreds of *religions* that people identify with—the most popular being Christianity (31.2%), Islam (24.1%), Hinduism (15.1%), and Buddhism (6.9%), with Judaism (0.2%) and others claiming fewer adherents (Hackett & McClendon, 2017) (Figure 10.20). Roughly 15% to 20% of the world’s population is not affiliated with a religion. In light of the many ways in which cultures differ, psychologists make cross-cultural comparisons in order to fully understand the commonalities and boundaries of human behavior (Berry et al., 2002; Shiraev & Levy, 2001).

#### ■ FIGURE 10.19 Global Expansion

Americans love their fast food, and so do other cultures (A). McDonald’s serves its food in over 100 countries and 36,899 stores all over the world (B).

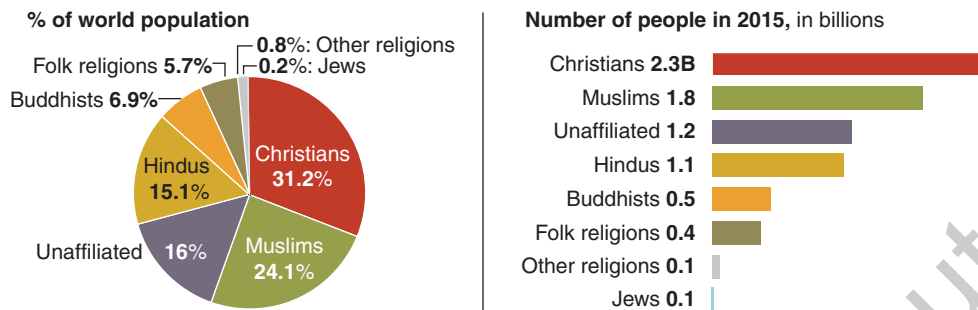


Source: Education & Exploration 1/Alamy Stock Photo; iStockPhoto.com/raisbeckfoto.

### FIGURE 10.20 Religious Groups by Population

Psychologists are ethically obliged to be respectful and attentive to the cultural diversity of their clients, and religion and spirituality contribute to our personal and social identities.

#### Christians were the largest religious group in 2015



Source: Hackett, Conrad, and David McClendon. "Christians remain world's largest religious group, but they are declining in Europe." Pew Research Center, Washington, DC (April 5, 2017) <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/05/christians-remain-worlds-largest-religious-group-but-they-are-declining-in-europe/>.

Samuel de Roman/Contributor/Getty Images



Cultures differ in their unique norms. Here, a man representing the devil leaps over newborns during the baby jumping festival of Castrillo de Murcia in Spain. The yearly festival, known locally as "El Colacho," takes place during the village's religious feast of Corpus Christi. This ritual represents the devil absorbing the sins of the babies, affording them protection from disease and misfortune. Afterward, the babies are sprinkled with rose petals and returned to their parents.

**social norms** Implicit rules of conduct according to which each culture operates.

**individualism** A cultural orientation in which personal goals and preferences take priority over group allegiances.

**collectivism** A cultural orientation in which cooperation and group harmony take priority over the self.

### Cultural Diversity: A Fact of Life

Linked together by space, language, religion, and historical bonds, each cultural group has its own ideology, folklore, music, political system, family structure, sexual mores, fashions, and foods. As governments and world travelers come to learn, sometimes the hard way, local customs and laws also vary in significant ways. In the affairs of day-to-day living, each culture operates by its own implicit rules of conduct, or social norms. **Social norms** can be so different from one country to the next, that people who travel for business or for pleasure should be armed with an awareness of local customs.

Just as cultures differ in their social norms, they also differ in the extent to which people are expected to adhere to those norms. As an example, compare the United States and China. In the United States, people value self-reliance, independence, and assertiveness. In China, however, people value conformity, loyalty, and political harmony (Oyserman & Lee, 2008; Zhai, 2017; Zhang et al., 2005). As we'll learn, this comparison indicates that there are two very different cultural orientations toward persons and the groups to which they belong. One orientation centers on the individual, the other on the group.

#### INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM: A TALE OF TWO CULTURAL WORLDVIEWS

Over the years, social psychologists have observed that cultures differ in the extent to which they value **individualism** and the virtues of independence, autonomy, and self-reliance or **collectivism** and the virtues of interdependence, cooperation, and social harmony. Under the banner of individualism, personal goals take priority over group allegiances. In collectivist cultures, however, the person is, first and foremost, a loyal member of a family, team, company, church, state, and other groups (see Table 10.2). In what countries are these differing orientations most extreme? Geert Hofstede (1980, 2013) reported that the most fiercely individualistic people were from the United States, Australia, Great Britain, Canada, and the Netherlands, in that order. The most collectivist people were from Venezuela, Colombia, Pakistan, Peru, Taiwan, and China. Other researchers have argued that Hofstede's inferences are flawed, since important variables that could contribute to collectivism and individualism were not measured (Brewer & Venaik, 2010; Minkov et al., 2017; Taras et al., 2010). In fact, Minkov and colleagues (2017) developed a revised measure of Hofstede's individualism-collectivism measure to include some of these important variables; they determined

**Table 10.2** Individualistic and Collectivist Orientations

1. If the group is slowing me down, it is better to leave it and work alone. (I)
2. I like my privacy. (I)
3. I can count on my relatives for help if I find myself in any kind of trouble. (C)
4. If you want something done right, you've got to do it yourself. (I)
5. It is reasonable for a son to continue his father's business. (C)
6. In the long run, the only person you can count on is yourself. (I)
7. I enjoy meeting and talking to my neighbors every day. (C)
8. I like to live close to my good friends. (C)
9. The bigger the family, the more family problems there are. (I)
10. There is everything to gain and nothing to lose for classmates to group themselves for study and discussion. (C)

Source: Adapted from H. C. Triandis. (1995).

that the most individualistic people were from the Netherlands, and the most collectivistic were from Nigeria. United States citizens were ranked twentieth in individualism. What is *your* orientation? Read the statements in Table 10.2 and see whether you agree or disagree with them. People from collectivist cultures tend to agree more with the C statements; those from individualistic cultures tend to agree more with the I statements.

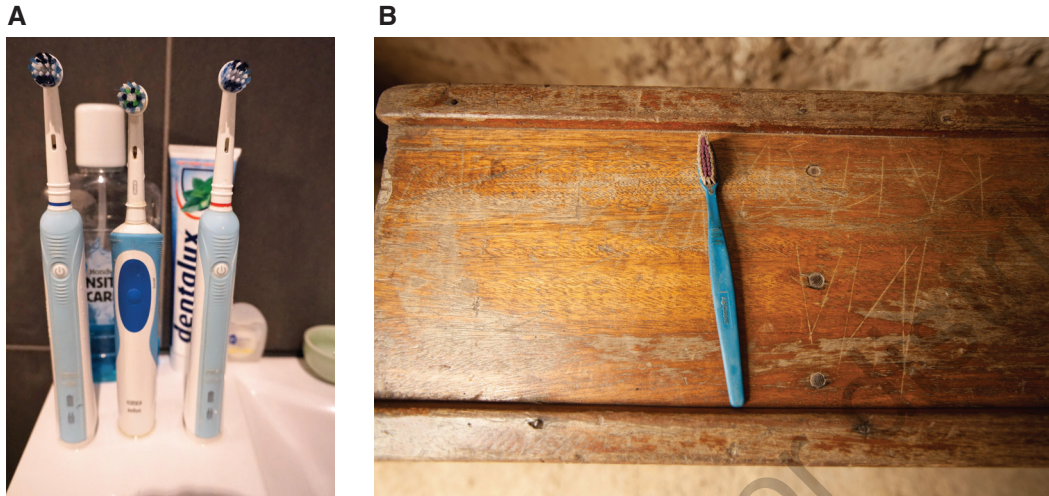
Why are some cultures individualistic and others collectivistic? Speculating about the origins of these orientations, Triandis (1995) suggests that there are three key factors. The first is the *complexity* of a society. As people live in more complex industrialized societies—for example, compared to a life of hunting and food gathering among desert nomads—they have more groups to identify with (family, hometown, alma mater, church, place of employment, political party, sports teams, social clubs, and so on), which means less loyalty to any one group and a greater focus on personal rather than collective goals. Second is the *affluence* of a society. As people prosper, they gain financial independence from one another, a condition that promotes social independence, mobility, and, again, a focus on personal rather than collective goals. The third factor is *heterogeneity*. Societies that are homogeneous or “tight” (where members share the same language, religion, and social customs) tend to be rigid and intolerant of those who veer from the norm (Figure 10.21). In contrast, societies that are culturally diverse or “loose” (where two or more cultures coexist) tend to be more permissive of dissent, thus allowing for greater individual expression. Other psychologists have speculated that these cultural orientations are rooted in religious ideologies—such as in the link between Christianity and individualism (Sampson, 2000).

**Conceptions of the Self.** Individualism and collectivism can be so deeply ingrained in a culture that they mold our very self-conceptions and identities. According to Hazel Markus and Shinobu Kitayama (1991, 2010), people who grow up in individualistic countries see themselves as entities that are *independent*—distinct, autonomous, and endowed with unique dispositions. By contrast, people from more collectivist countries hold *interdependent* views of the self as part of a larger social network that includes family, coworkers, friends, and others with whom they are socially connected. People with independent views say that “The only person you can count on is yourself” and “I enjoy being unique and different from others.” Those with interdependent views are more likely to agree that “I’m partly to blame if one of my family members or coworkers fails” and “My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me” (Rhee et al., 1995; Singelis, 1994; Triandis et al., 1998). These contrasting orientations—one focused on the personal self,



### FIGURE 10.21 Disparities

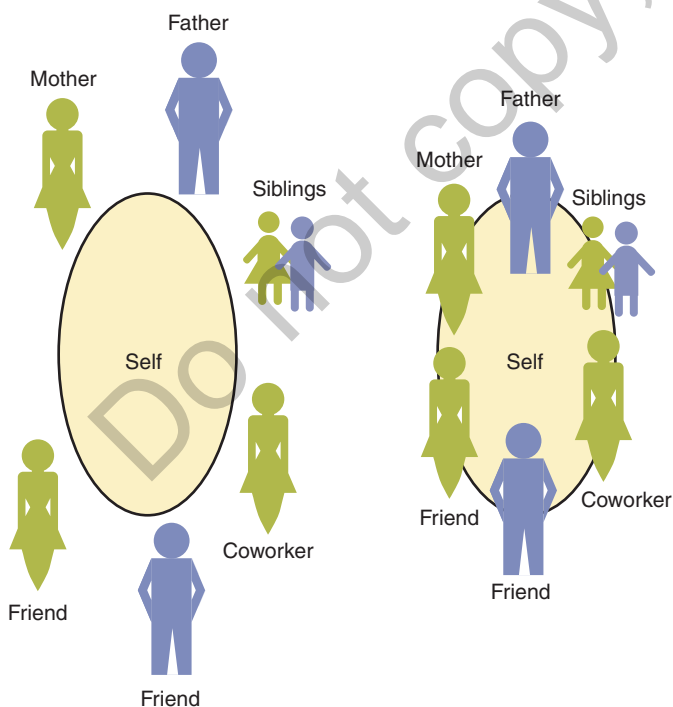
These photographs are featured on Dollar Street, a collection of 264 family photos from 50 countries. Even something as simple as brushing our teeth can be taken for granted and demonstrate vast differences in affluence and culture. The electronic toothbrushes belong to a family in the Netherlands where each person has their own designated toothbrush (A). Contrast that with the single toothbrush on the wooden board, which belongs to a Rwandan family who shares one toothbrush for the entire group (B).



Source: (A and B) Dollarstreet, licensed under CC BY 4.0.

### FIGURE 10.22 Self-Conceptions

Markus and Kitayama (1991) and Heine (2008) find that people from individualistic cultures see themselves as independent and distinct from others (left). In contrast, people in collectivist cultures see themselves as interdependent, as part of a larger social network (right).



the other on the collective self—are depicted in Figure 10.22.

But do people from individualistic cultures only think individually? Take Americans, for example. Research by Trafimow and others (1991) pondered this same question. They primed college students with a story about a warrior who either made military decisions based on what was good for the family (collectivistic) or what was good for his personal glory (individualistic). After reading the story, participants completed 20 “I am\_\_\_” statements (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954). Trafimow found that the people who read the individualistic warrior story were more likely to fill in the blank with personal trait descriptions (“I am shy”) than people who read the collectivistic warrior story. Trafimow concluded that people aren’t just collectivistic or individualistic. Information in our environment—like the story participants read—can bring to the surface one trait or the other. Additional research has also demonstrated that the collectivistic and individualistic selves can be activated with the environment (Grossmann & Jowhari, 2017; Mandel, 2003; Orehek et al., 2014; Trafimow et al., 1997). It’s no wonder that the environment in the United States is ripe with slogans such as, “Have it your way,” “May the best car win,” and “I’m lovin’ it.”

## Self-Assessment

### IMPLICIT BIAS (Forthcoming With Full Text)

For appropriate chapters, *Essentials of Psychology* will provide self-assessment opportunities for students to explore their attitudes and understanding regarding various topics. First, students will perform a short and engaging self-assessment based on a known

psychological measure, such as the Implicit Bias Test. Then, students are provided with deeper information about how true measures are established and how to discern pop psychology from assessment measures and research.

## Intergroup Discrimination

**10.5** Recognize the variables that contribute to prejudice and assess the role our brain plays in stereotype development.

- Explain how prejudice is a by-product of our thinking.
- Determine if we can control stereotyping.
- Identify the motives that fuel prejudice.
- Create an intervention for treating prejudice.

Minority groups of the world face unique challenges in their formation of an identity, and they may need to cope in different ways. Of the many obstacles that confront minorities in many cultures, the most disheartening is **discrimination**: behavior directed against persons because of their affiliation with a “different” social, racial, ethnic, or religious group. Instances of discrimination happen all over the world, causing its victims to be avoided, excluded, rejected, belittled, and attacked. The victims of discrimination often receive less-than-equal treatment in the pursuit of jobs, housing, educational opportunities, and other resources.

**discrimination** Behavior directed against persons because of their affiliation with a “different” social, racial, ethnic, or religious group.

### Stereotypes

To some extent, discrimination is a by-product of the beliefs we hold and the way we think. The beliefs are called stereotypes, and the cognitive processes that promote stereotyping are social categorization and the outgroup-homogeneity bias (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996).

A **stereotype** is a belief that associates a whole group of people with certain traits. When you stop to think about it, the list of common, well-known stereotypes seems endless. Consider some examples: women are nurturers, Asians excel at school, Italians are pasta experts, Jews are materialistic, elderly people cannot use technology, college professors are absent-minded, Black people have rhythm, White men are power-hungry, and used-car salespeople cannot be trusted. Now, truthfully, how many of these images ring a bell? More important, how do they influence our evaluations of each other? Some of these stereotypes are positive, and others are negative—depending on your perspective and the context. Labeled as nurturing because you are a woman could result in various outcomes. For one, the woman might get immediate acceptance at the playground. On the other hand, her gender might misguide police. It is a fact that women are not immune to behaving badly. However, when police respond to an intimate partner abuse call, they can use stereotypes to readily make false assumptions about whom is at fault simply due to gender (Russell, 2018). There are many theories on how such stereotypes are born within a culture. But social psychologists ask a different question: How do stereotypes operate in the minds of individuals, and how do they affect our judgments of others?

**stereotype** A belief that associates a group of people with certain traits.



Stereotypes are one way we simplify our social world. By stereotyping, we infer that a person has a whole range of characteristics and abilities that we assume all members of that group have.

**social categorization** The classification of persons into groups based on common attributes.

**outgroup-homogeneity bias** The tendency to assume that “they” (members of groups other than our own) are all alike.

and overlook the differences among individuals *within* groups (Stangor & Lange, 1994; Wilder, 1986; Zhang, 2015).

The second process that promotes stereotyping follows from the first. Although grouping people is like grouping objects, there’s a key difference: In social categorization, the perceivers themselves are members or nonmembers of the categories they employ. Groups that you identify with—your country, religion, political party, or even your hometown sports team—are called *in-groups*, whereas groups other than your own are called *outgroups*. The tendency to carve the world up into “us” and “them” has important psychological and social consequences, such as the pervasive tendency to assume that “they” are all alike—a phenomenon known as the **outgroup-homogeneity bias** (Linville & Jones, 1980). These effects are common, and there are many real-life examples. Americans who arrive from Korea, China, Vietnam, Taiwan, and the Philippines see themselves as quite different from one another, but to the Western eye they are all Asian. Likewise, the people of Mexico, Puerto Rico, Central America, and Cuba distinguish among themselves, but others refer to them all as Hispanic. Business majors talk about “engineering types,” engineers lump together “business types,” conservatives see liberals as all peas of the same pod, and although the natives of New York City proclaim their cultural and ethnic diversity, outsiders talk of the typical New Yorker. This phenomenon is also seen in studies of visual memory, which show that eyewitnesses find it relatively difficult to recognize members of a racial or ethnic group other than their own (Havard et al., 2017; Meissner & Brigham, 2001).

Clearly, we can bring stereotypes to mind automatically, without trying, and without awareness, and they can color our judgments of others. But this does not mean that each of us is inevitably trapped into evaluating people on the basis of social categories. Studies have shown that people are most likely to form a quick impression based on simple stereotypes when they’re busy or distracted (Cralley & Ruscher, 2005; Gilbert & Hixon, 1991; Reich & Mather, 2008), pressed for time (Pratto & Bargh, 1991), are superior pattern detectors (Lick et al., 2018), mentally tired (Bodenhausen, 1990), under the influence of alcohol (Bartholow et al., 2006; von Hippel et al., 1995), or elderly and set in their ways (Henry et al., 2009; Stewart et al., 2009; von Hippel et al., 2000). Thankfully, recent studies have also shown that we can stop ourselves from judging others in stereotyped ways just as we can learn to break other bad habits—as long as we are informed, alert, and motivated to do so (Blair et al., 2001; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Johns et al., 2008; Kung et al., 2018; Moskowitz & Li, 2011).

## Prejudice: The Motivational Roots

As people interact with others who are different in their culture, social class, and ethnic and religious background, tolerance of diversity becomes a social necessity. Too often, however, people

From a cognitive perspective, the formation of stereotypes involves two related processes. The first is that people naturally divide each other into groups based on sex, race, age, nationality, religion, and other attributes. This process is called **social categorization**. In some ways, social categorization is natural and adaptive. For example, what do limes, lemons, oranges, and grapefruits all have in common? They are all acidic fruits that grow on trees. By grouping human beings the way we group fruits, animals, furniture, and other objects, we make judgments quickly and easily (Keller, 2005) and use past experience to guide interactions with people we’ve never met (Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000). Some researchers argue that social categorization is innate and thus can be seen in infancy (Lieberman et al., 2017). So how could something the brain does naturally be bad? The problem is that categorization may lead us to magnify the differences *between* groups



evaluate others negatively because they are members of a particular group. This problem was illustrated by a viral video that captured Manhattan attorney Aaron Schlossberg saying to a group of Spanish speakers, “I pay for their welfare, I pay for their ability to be here—the least they can do is speak English” (Brito, 2018). This statement, which reveals a dislike of others because they are members of a particular group, is an expression of **prejudice**.

The streets of America are no stranger to prejudice. In Charleston, South Carolina, a disturbed young man opened fire on nine African Americans at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal church on June 15, 2015. At only 21 years old, he was a self-proclaimed White supremacist who claimed he committed the mass shooting to start a race war (Schuppe & Morrison, 2017). In Philadelphia, a man visiting his deceased loved ones on a Sunday morning in February 2017 arrived to a disheartening scene. More than 100 headstones at a Jewish cemetery were vandalized. In the workplace, people are often on the receiving end of harassment because of their gender identity, sexual orientation, race, religion, ethnicity, age, and disability (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2016). In the case of mechanic Laudente Montoya, his first few days at work set the stage for the rampant prejudicial remarks yet to come. New to the job, Laudente’s supervisor called Laudente and a coworker “stupid Mexicans” and claimed that Mexicans caused the swine flu epidemic in the United States (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2016). Laudente’s supervisor had no need or reason to use such hate speech. People often dislike and resent others simply because they are different. Throughout history and in all parts of the world, prejudice is one of the most tenacious social problems of modern times.

### REALISTIC-CONFLICT THEORY

There are two major motivational theories of prejudice. The first is **realistic-conflict theory**, which begins with a simple observation: Many intergroup conflicts in the world today stem from direct competition for valuable but limited resources (Levine & Campbell, 1972). As a matter of economics, one group may fare better than a neighboring group in a struggle for land, jobs, or power. The losers become frustrated, the winners feel threatened, and before long the conflict heats to a rapid boil. Chances are that a good deal of prejudice in the world—such as the hostility often directed at immigrants—is driven by the realities of competition (Binggeli et al., 2014; Hellwig & Sinno, 2016; Stephan et al., 1999; Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994; Tsukamoto & Fiske, 2017).

The premise of realistic-conflict theory in the study of prejudice seems compelling, but there’s more to the story—much more. Research has shown that people are often prejudiced even when the quality of their lives is *not* directly threatened by the outgroup they despise, and that people are sensitive about the status of their in-groups relative to rival outgroups even when personal interests are *not* at stake. Is it possible that personal interests really *are* at stake, that our protectiveness of in-groups is nourished by a concern for the self? If so, might that explain why people all over the world seem to think that their own nation, culture, and religion are better and more deserving than others?

### SOCIAL-IDENTITY THEORY

Questions about in-groups and outgroups were initially raised in a series of laboratory studies. In the first of these, Henri Tajfel and his colleagues (1971) showed participants a sequence of dotted slides and asked them to estimate the number of dots on each. The slides were flashed in rapid-fire succession, so the dots could not be counted. The experimenter then told participants that some people are chronic “overestimators” and others are “underestimators.” As part of a second, separate task, participants were then divided, supposedly for the sake of convenience,



ZUMA Press, Inc./Alamy Stock Photo

Prejudice is one of the most tenacious social afflictions of our time. The problem, as shown by these children of members of the Westboro Baptist Church, is that the hatred is passed from one generation to the next.

**prejudice** Negative feelings toward others based solely on their membership in a certain group.

**realistic-conflict theory** The theory that prejudice stems from intergroup competition for limited resources.

**in-group favoritism** The tendency to discriminate in favor of in-groups over outgroups.

**social-identity theory** The theory that people favor in-groups and discriminate against outgroups in order to enhance their own self-esteem.

into groups of overestimators and underestimators (in fact, the assignments were random). Knowing who was in their group, the participants allocated points to each other for various tasks, points that reflected favorable judgments and could be cashed in for money. This procedure was designed to create *minimal groups* of persons categorized by trivial similarities. The overestimators and underestimators were not bitter rivals, they had no history of antagonism, and they did not compete for a limited resource. Yet they allocated more points to members of their own group than to those of the outgroup. This pattern of discrimination, which is known as **in-group favoritism**, has been observed in experiments conducted all over the world (Capozza & Brown, 2000).

To explain in-group favoritism in the absence of realistic conflict, Tajfel (1982) and John Turner (1987) proposed **social-identity theory**. According to this theory, each of us strives to enhance our self-esteem, which has two components: a *personal* identity and various collective or *social* identities that are based on the groups to which we belong. In other words, people can boost their self-esteem through their personal achievements or by affiliating with successful groups. What's nice about the need for social identity is that it leads us to derive pride from our connections with others. What's sad, however, is that often we feel the need to belittle "them" in order to feel secure about "us." Religious fervor, racial and ethnic conceit, and patriotism may all fulfill this darker side of our social identity. In this way, prejudice is nourished by a concern for oneself. The theory is summarized in Figure 10.23.

Social-identity theory makes two predictions: (1) threats to self-esteem should heighten the need to exhibit prejudice, and (2) expressions of prejudice should, in turn, restore one's self-esteem. Research generally supports these predictions (Brewer & Brown, 1998; Capozza & Brown, 2000; Hogg & Abrams, 1990; Turner et al., 1994). People differ in the extent to which they want their social in-groups to dominate others. In studies conducted in the United States and Canada, people who are motivated by a need for social dominance exhibit more in-group favoritism and endorse more cultural values that favor "us" over "them" (Pratto et al., 2000; Sidanius et al., 2000; Whitley, 1999). However, other research does not support the aforementioned predictions. Turner and Reynolds (2003) argue that social dominance is a flawed theory. Mainly, its claim that humans have a "ubiquitous drive for social hierarchy irrespective of group position, has been disconfirmed" (Turner & Reynolds, 2003, p. 205). Not everyone has such a motivation, which might be why findings on social dominance are inconsistent.

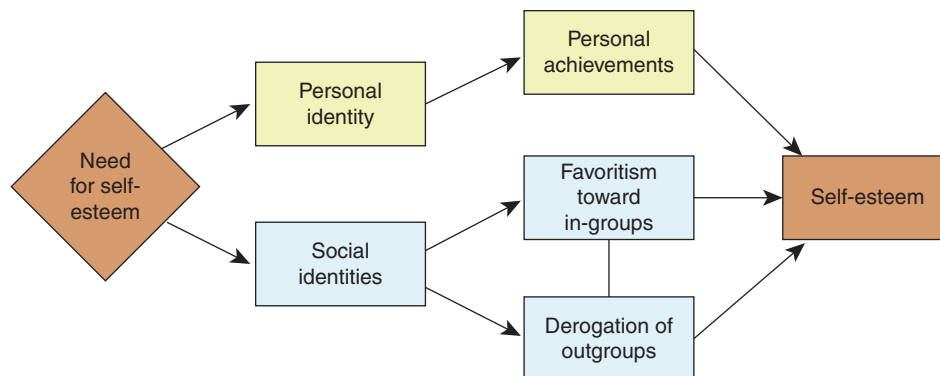
Xinhua/Alamy Stock Photo



In one of the world's most volatile areas of conflict, the Gaza Strip, Israeli military fire tear gas at Palestinian protesters along the barrier between Gaza and Israel on June 8, 2018.

### FIGURE 10.23 Social-Identity Theory

According to social-identity theory, people strive to enhance self-esteem, which has two components: a personal identity and various social identities derived from the groups to which we belong. Thus, people can boost their self-image by viewing and treating in-groups more favorably than outgroups.



## Racism in America

The slave trade. The Deep South. Abolitionists. The Civil War. Lynch mobs. Separate but equal. The Ku Klux Klan. Jackie Robinson. Sitting in the back of the bus. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civil rights. Malcolm X. School busing. *Roots*. Muhammad Ali. Affirmative action. The Reverend Jesse Jackson. The Confederate flag. Rodney King. O.J. Simpson. *12 Years a Slave*. Trayvon Martin. The removal of Confederate monuments. Unite the Right Rally. Race relations in the United States have had a checkered, troubled, and emotional history—a history marked by both hatred and guilt, riots and peace marches, tolerance and intolerance, advances and setbacks. At the heart of it all is **racism**: a deep-seated form of prejudice based on the color of a person's skin. In the United States, this conflict is multidirectional, with all groups exhibiting prejudice in one form or another.

**racism** A deep-seated form of prejudice that is based on the color of a person's skin.

### THE PROBLEM

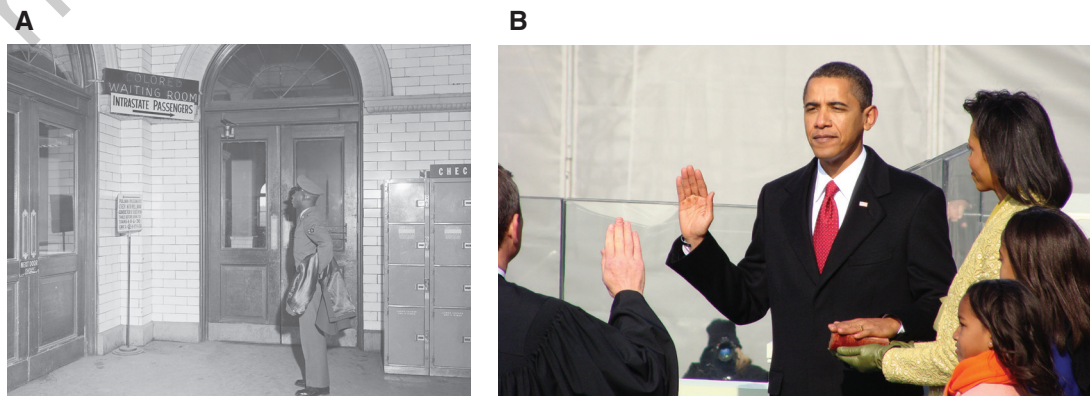
It has been said that if a person is White, then that person will never really understand what it feels like to be a Black person living in the United States—and what it felt like many years ago, in the segregated South. In a powerful and revealing book, *Remembering Jim Crow*, historian William Chafe and others (2002) interviewed 1,200 elderly Black Americans who lived in 10 states of the segregated South during the first half of the twentieth century. These witnesses to history recalled separate drinking fountains and restrooms, backdoor entries to public facilities, separate platforms at the train station. Some recalled rapes, beatings, and harrowing escapes in the middle of the night from lynch mobs. All recall how carefully they had to move about in an unpredictable land—where some Whites were friendly and helpful, others hostile and prejudiced.

### THE SYMPTOMS

Racism in the twenty-first century is a problem that poisons social relations between various groups. In this chapter, we have mentioned racism toward Middle Easterners, Latinxs, and most notably in America, Blacks. Detecting racism is not as easy as it may seem. In 1958, 4% of Americans polled approved of biracial Black-White marriages (Newport, 2013). When polled again in 2013, the approval rate for biracial Black-White marriages leapt to 87%. These data from 2013 might lead us to assume that racism would continue to decline (Figure 10.24). However, a 2017 Gallup poll demonstrated that the percentage of Americans who worry a “great deal” about race relations jumped to 42% in 2017 from 17% in 2014—a staggering 25% increase (Swift, 2020).

#### ■ FIGURE 10.24 Advancements

Although racism is still a serious and pervasive problem in the United States, from an historical perspective it is on the decline. Looking back, America has come a long way from the forced segregation common in the first half of the twentieth century (A) to a historic day on January 20, 2009, when Barack Obama was inaugurated as the 44th President of the United States (B).



Source: (A and B) Bettmann/ Contributor/Getty Images; Bart Stupak via Wikimedia Commons.



Whether or not we judge people because of their race is still a controversial topic. An interview on *The Daily Show With Trevor Noah* featuring political influencer, Tomi Lahren, stirred the controversy when she claimed she didn't see color in matters of race (Comedy Central, 2016). Other celebrities, such as Jennifer Lopez (Woog, 2008), have claimed the same. Is the United States becoming color blind, or are we fooling ourselves? Take these incidents that happened in 2018 at Starbucks, Yale University, a park in Oakland, California, and a home for sale in Memphis, Tennessee, where White women called the police on innocent Black men and women. None of the Black men and women in question were behaving illegally. The Black men at Starbucks simply wanted to use the restroom while waiting for a business associate (Siegel, 2018). The Black woman at Yale University was a student who happened to fall asleep studying in the dorm common room (Reilly, 2018). The two Black men at a park in Oakland were enjoying the outdoors by having a barbecue (Fearnow, 2018). The Black man accused of trespassing in Memphis was taking photos of a home for sale because he was contemplating its purchase (Criss, 2018). A collection of sociological research reviewed by Shams (2015) argues that colorblindness is a flawed concept. He claims the reality is that racism persists; it is simply subtler than it was during the pre-Civil Rights era (Shams, 2015).

In an old and classic demonstration of subtle racism, Allport and Postman (1947) showed White participants a picture of a subway train filled with passengers. In the picture were a Black man dressed in a suit and a White man holding a razor (see Figure 10.25). One participant viewed the scene briefly and described it to a second person who had not seen it. The second participant communicated the description to a third person and so on, through six rounds of communication. The result: The final participant's report often indicated that the Black man, not the White man, had held the razor. Some participants even reported that he was waving the weapon in a threatening manner.

Needing to measure prejudice in order to study it, social psychologists sought to develop indirect tests that can detect negative feelings that people are not willing or able to admit to a pollster. Several years ago, researchers found that reaction time—the speed it takes to answer a question—can be used to uncover hidden prejudices (Dovidio et al., 1997; Gaertner &

#### Implicit Association Test

**(IAT)** A measure of stereotyping that is derived from the speed at which people respond to pairings of concepts (such as Blacks or Whites with good or bad).

#### FIGURE 10.25 How Racist Beliefs Distort Perceptions

After looking at this drawing, one participant described it to a second, who described it to a third, and so on. After six rounds of communication, the final report often placed the razor blade held by the White man into the Black man's hand (Allport & Postman, 1947).



Source: Allport and Postman, (1947).

McLaughlin, 1983). It takes less time to react to information that fits into existing beliefs, and more time to react to information that contradicts existing beliefs.

Picking up on the use of reaction time to betray a person's unconscious feelings, Anthony Greenwald, Mahzarin Banaji, and their colleagues developed the **Implicit Association Test**, or **IAT**. The IAT measures how readily people can associate pairs of concepts (Greenwald et al., 1998). As people work through the test, they often find that some pairings are harder—and take longer to respond to—than others. In general, people are quicker to respond when liked faces pair with positive words and disliked faces pair with negative words rather than the other way around. The IAT intends to detect implicit attitudes about Black Americans by the speed it takes a person to respond to *Black—bad/White—good* pairings relative to *Black—good/White—bad* pairings.

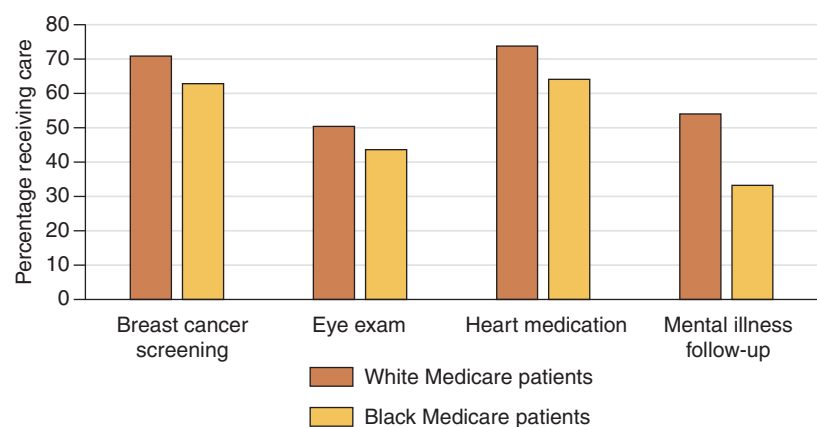
Reaction-time tests may seem like they don't tell us much about how we behave or think in the real world. Couldn't we simply fake our responses? Interestingly, one IAT study asked participants to do exactly that (Banse et al., 2001). However, participants who identified as heterosexual could only fake their explicit attitudes. When they tried to fake positive attitudes toward persons who identified as homosexual during the IAT, they failed. Do all IAT findings predict behavioral outcomes? Oswald and colleagues (2013) argue that the IAT is in need of improvement, since IAT research doesn't consistently predict behavioral outcomes. On the contrary, a collection of results from various IAT studies demonstrates that for socially sensitive subjects, the IAT does a good job of predicting behavior (Greenwald et al., 2009). A study on obesity and hiring practices found that employers who chose to interview fewer obese persons than nonobese persons had significantly more negative implicit associations toward obesity than employers who interviewed more obese persons (Agerström & Rooth, 2011). In a study by Richetin and colleagues (2010), participants completed the IAT for aggression and found that it significantly predicted whether or not a person would aggressively respond if provoked. Cooper and colleagues (2012) had clinicians complete the IAT, and then surveyed the clinicians' patients about communication and quality of care from said clinician. They found that clinician implicit bias was associated with poorer ratings of care and visit communication.

Other medical research has focused on the ramifications of racial bias on patients. One research group studied the health records for 300,000 senior citizens enrolled in Medicare-managed health care plans. Figure 10.26 shows that Black patients were less likely than White patients to receive breast-cancer screening, beta blocker medications after heart attacks, follow-up visits after hospitalization for a psychological disorder, and eye examinations for those with diabetes. These disparities in medical care were significant even after socioeconomic differences were accounted for (Schneider et al., 2002). Hoffman and colleagues (2016) discovered that half of a sample of White medical students and White medical residents believed false biological differences about Black patients and thus rated Black patients' pain as lower. Hoffman and colleagues (2016) argue that these false beliefs could explain why doctors systematically undertreat Black Americans for pain.

This racial disparity in medical treatment garnered much-deserved attention after Serena Williams spoke openly about her severe complications after childbirth. Serena gave birth via C-section. She knew she had a history of blood clots; when her symptoms appeared, she quickly grabbed a nurse but was ignored. Serena persisted and told the doctors she needed a CT scan, but they chose another procedure that revealed nothing. Finally, the medical team performed the CT scan she requested and found several small blood clots in her lungs (Haskell, 2018). Serena's story is not isolated. The mortality rate for women due to childbirth complications in the industrialized world is the highest in the United States (Ellison & Martin, 2019). In terms of racial differences, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018) notes that in 2013, 43.5% of deaths as a complication of pregnancy were Black women compared to White and other race women at 12.7% and 14.4%, respectively. No matter how subtle, innocent, or unintended the discrimination, the effect can mean the difference between life and death.

■ **FIGURE 10.26** Racial Disparities in Medical Care

Racial and ethnic minorities face challenges in access to medical care in the United States. When they receive it, their care may not be equivalent to that for other groups.





SOCIAL MEDIA/REUTERS/Newscom

Serena Williams underwent surgery for blood clots and a ruptured C-section suture after childbirth complications. Her complications were so serious that her doctor ordered 6 weeks of bedrest after treatment. Serena shared her story to bring more attention to the matter.

### THE INTERVENTION

Racism is a social disease transmitted from one generation to the next. One wonders if an intervention can reduce it. In a laboratory study, Devine and colleagues (2012) developed an intervention intended to reduce implicit racial bias. She divided non-Black college students into two groups: intervention and control. All students first completed the IAT and measures of explicit bias, and they returned to complete those same measures across a span of several weeks. After the first measurements were taken, controls were dismissed but the intervention group was educated on the idea of prejudice as a habit, implicit bias, and the perpetuation of discrimination. Next, participants in the intervention group were taught five strategies for reducing prejudice and racial bias: stereotype replacement, counter-stereotypic imaging, individuation, perspective taking, and increasing opportunities for contact. Results demonstrated that the intervention group had lower IAT scores, more concern about discrimination, and more awareness about their person bias than controls. This habit-breaking intervention was replicated by Forscher and colleagues (2017) when a larger group of intervention participants demonstrated long-term effects in increased sensitivity to biases, and they were more likely than controls to object to online endorsements of racial stereotyping. Another study on training-away bias demonstrated that participants who practiced counterstereotype training scored lower on measures of implicit bias than those who did not practice the training (Burns et al., 2017). Thankfully, psychologists are working hard to undo what we have unintentionally done. Results like these have inspired Starbucks to be one of the first major corporations to implement anti-bias training (Nordell, 2018).

### LEARNING CHECK

#### Intergroup Hostility

Match each term in the left column to the statement from the right column that most closely illustrates it.

1. Discrimination	a. White men can't jump.
2. Racism	b. All Asians like sushi.
3. Stereotype	c. My team rules.
4. Outgroup-homogeneity bias	d. My dad's country club doesn't allow Jews.
5. Realistic-conflict theory	e. Everybody knows jocks are stupid.
6. In-group favoritism	f. Affirmative action keeps White people out of jobs they deserve.

(Answers: 1. d; 2. a; 3. b; 4. e; 5. f; 6. c)

## THINKING LIKE A PSYCHOLOGIST ABOUT SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Let's step back for a moment and revisit Milgram's studies of obedience to authority. This counterintuitive, if not shocking, research cries out the message of social psychology: that people are influenced in profound ways by their social

surroundings. At the core, human beings are highly social creatures. We need each other, sometimes desperately. This is precisely why we have the power to influence others—and why we are sometimes so vulnerable to manipulation by others.



Think about the material presented in this chapter—from Dr. Kimmel’s heroism to the abuse of Louise Ogborn—and you’ll see that human social behavior is filled with contradiction. From studies of social perception, interpersonal attraction, conformity, persuasion, group processes, aggression, and altruism, it’s clear that each of us is influenced and even changed, for better and for worse, by the words and actions of other people.

When you stop to consider the ways in which all humans are similar and share a common fate, the differences seem small and unimportant. Yet as we come into more and more contact with people from other cultures, as our society becomes increasingly diverse, and as tensions between Black and White Americans persist, it seems clear that we must recognize the

differences among us if we are to understand, communicate, and be tolerant if not appreciative of one another.

Should we ignore the differences among individuals and groups? If we ignore our differences, we could lose our ability to appreciate the beautiful diversity in the world. Based on the research you have learned about categorization, can the brain really ignore differences? If we use an alternative strategy—one that encourages people to derive pride and a sense of belonging from their social identities—that could result in equal treatment devoid of discrimination. Diversity should be celebrated, not ignored. Clearly, there are similarities among us, and there are differences. The trick is not to focus exclusively on one or the other but to strike a sensible balance.

## PROCESS OF DISCOVERY: HAZEL ROSE MARCUS

Process of Discovery interviews offer a firsthand account of how eminent psychologists, in their own words, came upon their major contributions. These stories, which help learners

think like psychologists, are windows into the minds of those who have shaped the field of psychology.

### Hazel Rose Markus, Cultural Influences on the Self

**Q: How did you first become interested in psychology?**

**A:** My family moved from London to Los Angeles when I was just entering school. I always paid close attention to everyone around me and saw that there were differences in how to behave in different places. I was also surprised at how people in what appeared to be similar conditions often behaved so differently.

**Q: How did you come up with your important discovery?**

**A:** Maybe it was because I was in graduate school during the “me” decade of the 1970s but it always seemed obvious to me that the *self* was of central importance to people. The self is the place where the person meets society. If people engage different social contexts and environments, they will have different selves.

When I taught at the University of Michigan, we had an exchange program with Osaka University in Japan. I gave lectures there about the importance of self-esteem. One day my colleague and friend Shinobu Kitayama said, “Did you realize that nothing you say about the self makes sense in Japan?” He probably

said it more politely, but this is what I remember. His remark was disconcerting, but it was not really shocking. If selves differ depending on the situation, then it made sense. Since Japanese and American worlds were so different, it was hardly surprising that Japanese and American selves would also differ.

At the time, my daughter was small and we were listening to *Sesame Street* tapes. I remember one song in which Grover sang: “I am very proud of me/I think I will sing out loud of me/There ought to be a crowd of me/Because I am so special!” Grover’s positive, self-oriented view fit well with our studies showing that American college students think they are smarter, more social, more athletic, and more moral than their peers. Yet my Japanese colleagues were amazed by Grover’s song. Praising the self is not common in Japan, and we found that Japanese college students do not show these self-enhancing tendencies.

**Q: How has the field you inspired developed over the years?**

**A:** Many psychologists are now interested in cultural variations in cognition, emotion, motivation, personality, development, psychopathology, stereotyping and prejudice, intergroup processes,

(Continued)

(Continued)

and organizational behavior. We now know that it is important to attend to a person's significant social and cultural contexts.

**Q: What is your prediction on where the field is heading?**

**A:** Many students from diverse ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds within North America and around the world are now entering psychology. They bring with them perspectives that differ from

those of their middle-class European and American predecessors who had organized the field. It is an exciting time for psychology. We are now beginning to reveal important differences and universals in human social behavior. My prediction is that the field will become increasingly interested in the human capacity to make meaning, share ideas, and build distinct worlds according to these ideas.

Hazel Rose Markus is Professor of Psychology and Davis-Brack Professor of Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University.

## SUMMARY

**Social psychology** is the study of how individuals think, feel, and behave in social situations. The principal message

is that people can influence one another's behavior in profound ways.

### SOCIAL PERCEPTION

**Social perception** refers to the processes of coming to know and evaluate other people. The impressions we form of others are largely based on our observations of their behavior.

#### Making Attributions

People make **attributions** for other people's behavior. According to **attribution theory** (Kelley, 1967), people analyze a person's behavior and its situational context in order to make a personal attribution or a situational attribution. According to Kelley, people use three types of information in making attributions: consensus (how other people react in the situation), distinctiveness (how the target person reacts in other situations), and consistency (how the target person reacts at different times).

Other studies point to attribution errors and biases. In explaining the behavior of others, we typically overestimate the role of personal factors, the **fundamental attribution error**. This tendency may be unique to cultures that value individualism.

### SOCIAL INFLUENCE

#### Social Influence as "Automatic"

As social animals, human beings are vulnerable to a host of subtle influences. This was demonstrated in studies showing that, in both social and nonsocial situations, people unconsciously mimic each other's behaviors.

#### Forming Impressions

In perceiving others, people are subject to a **primacy effect** by which first impressions weigh heavily and are highly resistant to change. Through various cognitive-confirmation biases, first impressions guide the way we interpret later contradictory evidence. Through behavioral-confirmation biases, we often alter our behavior and unwittingly shape others in ways that confirm our impressions.

#### Attraction

There are several factors that spark a positive impression, or attraction. The first is familiarity. Through the **mere-exposure effect**, exposure to a person increases liking. A second factor is physical attractiveness. People like others who are physically attractive and behave more warmly toward them. Third, people like others who are similar in attitudes and interests.

#### Conformity

**Conformity** is the tendency to change one's opinion or behavior in response to social norms. Classic studies by Sherif and Asch revealed two types of social influence. People demonstrating **informational influence** go along with the group

and change their opinions because they believe the others are correct. **Normative influence** leads people to conform only in their public behavior because they fear social rejection.

Conformity increases with group size (up to a point) and with the salience of social norms. Conformity decreases when an ally is present. Cultural factors are also important, as more conformity is found in cultures that value social harmony. Nonconformists are unpopular, but they can influence majorities by sticking to their positions with consistency and confidence.

Milgram's research showed that even decent people can violate their conscience on command. By varying characteristics of the authority, victim, and situation, he was able to determine what factors increase the likelihood of obedience.

### Attitude Change

An **attitude** is a positive, negative, mixed, or indifferent reaction toward a person, object, or idea. Attitudes can be changed using the **central** or **peripheral routes to persuasion**. The central route requires people's attention since it uses logic and

facts, whereas the peripheral route uses emotions. Behaviors can also lead to attitude change. For example, you might have once thought sushi was disgusting, but after trying it, you discovered it was delicious.

**Cognitive dissonance** is also a mechanism for attitude change. When our behaviors fail to correspond with our attitudes, we can experience an internal conflict. How can we remove that conflict? We change our attitude to match our behavior.

### Group Processes

People behave differently in groups than when alone. Through **social facilitation**, the presence of others enhances performance on simple tasks but impairs performance on complex tasks. Zajonc explained that the mere presence of others increases arousal and triggers our dominant response. Others have proposed different interpretations. In joint activities, people often exert less effort than they would alone. This **social loafing** increases with group size because people do not see the link between their own effort and the desired group outcome.

## SOCIAL RELATIONS

### Aggression

**Aggression** is rooted in both human biology and social factors. Although instinct theories do not account for differences among cultures, there are biological influences and perhaps even a genetic component. Men are more physically aggressive than women, and aggression is also increased by alcohol.

In general, aversive stimulation sparks aggression. Studies of the **frustration-aggression hypothesis** show that frustration correlates with aggressive behavior. Climate is also linked to aggression. Once aversive stimulation arouses negative emotion, situational cues—such as the presence of weapons

and exposure to violence—prompt us to turn the feeling into action.

### Altruism

Does **altruism**—helping behavior primarily motivated by a desire to benefit others—really exist, or is helping always selfishly motivated?

Studies demonstrate a **bystander effect** in which the presence of others inhibits helping. The bystander effect can reduce our tendency to interpret an event as an emergency and create a **diffusion of responsibility**, a belief that others are providing the necessary help.

## CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

It's a small world, but there are still differences among cultures and ethnic groups. To understand the commonalities and differences among people around the world, psychologists make cross-cultural comparisons.

### Cultural Diversity: A Fact of Life

Each culture operates according to its own implicit **social norms**. Social psychologists have observed that cultures differ

in the extent to which they value **individualism** or **collectivism**. One theory suggests that a society's complexity, affluence, and heterogeneity may be factors, while others point to religious ideologies. Research shows that cultural individualism and collectivism mold our conceptions of ourselves as independent or interdependent. While we all have individualistic and collectivistic traits, environmental cues can make one trait or the other more accessible.



## INTERGROUP DISCRIMINATION

Of the many obstacles that confront minorities, the most disheartening is **discrimination**: behavior directed against persons because of their affiliation with a “different” social, racial, ethnic, or religious group.

### Stereotypes

Discrimination is a by-product of **stereotypes**: beliefs that associate a group of people with certain traits. The process of **social categorization** by which we divide persons into groups based on common attributes is natural, but it can lead to **out-group-homogeneity bias**—the tendency to assume that members of groups other than our own are all alike, causing us to overlook diversity within groups and misjudge individuals. Thankfully, we can overcome stereotypes if we are alert, informed, and motivated.

### Prejudice: The Motivational Roots

Examples of **prejudice**—negative feelings toward others based solely on their membership in a certain group—are all

too common. **Realistic-conflict theory** attributes prejudice to intergroup competition for limited resources, but **social-identity theory** holds that people practice **in-group favoritism** even in the absence of realistic conflict because their self-esteem is based on the groups to which they belong as well as on their personal identity.

### Racism in America

**Racism**, a deep-seated form of prejudice based on the color of a person’s skin, poisons social relations between people who are not of the same race or ethnicity. The most notable racism in America is that experienced by Black people. While many of the obvious negative stereotypes of Black people may have faded, the **Implicit Association Test (IAT)** reveals that attitudes such as a preference for White over Black may be deeply ingrained in our culture. However, research suggests that bias can be overcome when people are made aware, have the motivation to change, and are brought together in a common cause.

## CRITICAL THINKING

### THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES





1. Most students, at one time or another, have experienced social loafing firsthand when working in groups for a class project. What policies could a professor implement to reduce the incidence of social loafing on group projects?
2. Is aggression innate, learned, or both? Support your position with empirical evidence. What does this imply about the most effective method(s) of reducing violence?
3. Discuss some of the strengths and weaknesses of collectivistic and individualistic cultural orientations. In what ways might the formation of an ethnic identity be influenced by a conflict of cultural orientations?
4. Are stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination inevitable? Why or why not?
5. Suppose you are in charge of student relations at a diverse university. What specific things can you do to foster inclusivity for neuro-, cultural, and physical diversity among all students?

### CAREER CONNECTION

While some psychologists choose to focus on research, others choose to focus their careers on applied psychology and working directly with people and communities. Its near universal

application—from counseling and relationships to advertising and business—makes psychology one of the most versatile and valuable majors in all of higher education.

■ FIGURE 10.27

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Career Connection</b></p> 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Athletic Trainer Fitness Instructor</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Social Worker Social Services Assistant</p>
		<p><b>Is a Degree in Psychology for You?</b></p> <p><b>Do you...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have an interest in helping people?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Want to learn how to think critically?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have an interest in research?</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;">Reporter Writer</p>		

Source: (Left to right) iStockPhoto.com/sanjeri; iStockPhoto.com/eclipse\_images; iStockPhoto.com/Prostock-Studio; iStockPhoto.com/izusek.

## KEY TERMS

aggression

altruism

attitude

attributions

attribution theory

bystander effect

central route to persuasion

cognitive dissonance

collectivism

conformity

diffusion of responsibility

discrimination

frustration-aggression hypothesis

fundamental attribution error

Implicit Association Test (IAT)

individualism

informational influence

in-group favoritism

mere-exposure effect

normative influence

outgroup-homogeneity bias

peripheral route to persuasion

prejudice

primacy effect

racism

realistic-conflict theory

social categorization

social facilitation

social-identity theory

social loafing

social norms

social perception

social psychology

stereotype