Interpersonal Attraction and Personal Relationships

Chapters 8 & 9

Banu Cingöz Ulu
The Need to Belong

• We want people around us!
• Loneliness: experienced when our social relations are inadequate (≠ aloneness)
• Emotional loneliness – absence of an intimate relationship
• Social loneliness – absence of social integration or community involvement
The Need to Belong

- I lack companionship.
- There are people who really understand me*
- I am no longer close to anyone.
- There is no one I can turn to.
- I feel part of a group of friends*
- My social relationships are superficial.
The Need to Belong

• Social rejection
  – Punishment ("go to your room!")
  – “Silent treatment”
  – **Ostracism**: experience of being ignored or rejected by others
    • E.g., catching and throwing a virtual ball on a computer game!
Attachment

• Strong emotional bond to a significant other person

• An infant:
  – Responds positively to specific people (e.g., mom)
  – Feels better when close
  – Seeks them out when frightened
Attachment styles

• **Secure attachment**: parent is generally available and responsive.

• **Avoidant attachment**: parent is cool, unresponsive, rejecting.

• **Anxious/ambivalent attachment**: parent is anxious, inconsistently responsive.

• **Our early attachment styles influence our later romantic attachment styles**
# Attachment styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Attachment style</th>
<th>% of population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable</td>
<td>SECURE</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depending on them and having them depend on me. I don’t often worry about</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>getting abandoned or about someone getting too close to me.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Attachment styles

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>I am somewhat uncomfortable being too close to others; I find it difficult to trust them completely, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I am nervous when anyone gets too close, and often, love partners want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.</td>
<td>AVOIDANT</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Attachment styles

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<th>Description</th>
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<th>% of population</th>
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<tr>
<td>I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn’t really love me or won’t want to stay with me. I want to merge completely with another person, and this desire sometimes scares people away.</td>
<td>ANXIOUS / AMBIVALENT</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attachment styles

• Adult versus infant attachment:
  – Reciprocal
  – Between peers
  – Sexual

• Securely attached people have more satisfying happy relationships that last.

• Seeking support from partner during times of distress.
Liking

In general:
• we like those who like us
• we like those who satisfy our needs
• we like those when our interactions are profitable: rewards > costs
  – “Social exchange theory”
Liking

• Proximity
  – We like those who are nearby

• Familiarity
  – We like those who we see often
  – Mere exposure effect

• Similarity
  – We like those who’re like us
  – “matching principle”

• Warmth and competence
Physical Attractiveness

• Other things being equal, we tend to like attractive people more.
Physical Attractiveness

• “What is beautiful is good” stereotype
  – May be more socially skilled
  – Also believed to be more intelligent, dominant & mentally healthy
  – Receive help, job recommendations, and more lenient punishments
  – Let’s watch
Physical Attractiveness

• Who is attractive?
• Cultural stereotypes
• Some commonalities as well:
  – Statistically “average” faces
  – Symmetrical or balanced faces
If a man (woman) had all the other qualities you desired, would you marry this person if you were not in love with him (her)?
Answer by US youth:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>1967</th>
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<th>1976</th>
<th></th>
<th>1984</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDECIDED</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>84.9</td>
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</table>
Association of romantic love with marriage is very recent
Romantic Love

Passionate Love
• Wildly emotional
• Uncontrollable
• Physiological arousal
• Preoccupation with other
• Idealization of other
• Strikes suddenly, fades quickly

Companionate Love
• Affection we feel for those w/whom our lives are intertwined
• Trust
• Caring
• Tolerance
• Develops slowly, basis for enduring relationship
Gender & Love

• Women more likely to feel sexually attracted to someone after feeling romantically attracted to them.
• Women emphasize emotional intimacy more than men.
• Also applies to homosexual population.
• Men focused more on sexual mating aspect, women on attachment aspect.
• Women generally more picky in choosing partners.
• Yet how do men have a more romantic view of love? (Fall in love quickly and fall out of love slowly)
Mate Selection: Sex differences

• For both sexes: dependability, maturity, and pleasantness are most important.
• Men rank physical attractiveness higher.
• Women rank financial resources higher.
• Men prefer younger partners, while women prefer older partners.
Personal Relationships

• essential feature: \textit{interdependence}
• three basic characteristics:
  – frequent interaction, long period of time
  – many different type of activities
  – strong mutual influence
Social Exchange Theory

• reward: anything gained from interaction
  – e.g., love, smile, expensive gifts
• cost: any negative consequence
  – e.g., time, energy, effort, conflict, disapproval, opportunity cost...
• Outcome = Rewards - Costs
• keep track of R & C (aware at some level)
Romantic Equity

• happiest in a relationship when it feels fair
• perceived fairness:
  – equity principle:
    \[
    \frac{P's \ outcome}{P's \ contributions} = \frac{O's \ outcome}{O's \ contributions}
    \]
• but, equity less important than overall rewards received
Interdependence Theory

• distinction between exchange and communal relationships
  – expectation of a “return”
  – caring for other’s well-being, feeling responsible
  – “we-ness”: inclusion of other in the self
Inclusion of the other in the self

DIRECTIONS: Please circle the picture which best describes your relationship.
Self-Disclosure

• share intimate information and feelings with s.o.

• strongly related to liking, but:
  – needs to be reciprocal and gradual
  – roommate vs. stranger in lecture hall

• also includes dangers: indifference, rejection, loss of control, betrayal
Intimacy

• As a result of self-disclosure, when we feel:
  – understood,
  – validated,
  – cared for

• psychological experience of closeness

• depends on the responses of the other
Balance of Power

• social power: ability to deliberately influence s.o. else
• sometimes equal power in both partners, other times one has more power
• heterosexual couples in USA:
  – 64% equal; 27% male-dom; 9% fem-dom
Balance of Power

• Three determinants of power:
  • social norms and attitudes
  • relative resources
    – especially if the man has more resources such as income
  • principle of least interest
    – least dependent on relationship
    -> more power
Conflict

• actions of one person interferes with the other’s
• increased likelihood as interdependence increases
• mostly studied in heterosexual dating and married couples
• couples fight about...?
Conflict

• specific behaviors
  – “don’t squeeze the toothpaste from the middle!”

• norms and roles
  – “you always forget important dates”

• personal dispositions
  – “you’re so lazy and inconsiderate”
Conflict

• can help or hurt
• the key: how is it resolved?
→ defensiveness, threat, violence
→ clarification, depth of feelings, renew efforts for a satisfying relationship
Satisfaction

• subjective evaluation of the quality of relationship
• when R > C (profitable)
• costs versus sacrifices
• perception of fairness important
Commitment

• all the forces that act to keep a person in a relationship
• + (attractions) or – (barriers)
• “personal commitment”
  – e.g., relationship satisfaction (+)
• “moral commitment”
  – e.g., obligation, duty (+)
• “constraint commitment”
  – e.g., alternatives and investments (−)
Commitment

- Satisfaction with Relationship
- Quality of Alternatives
- Investment in Relationship

Commitment

Stay versus Leave Relationship
## Responses to dissatisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructive</th>
<th>ACTIVE</th>
<th>PASSIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ Voice</td>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Exit</td>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td></td>
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