

Person Perception

Forming Impressions of Others

Person Perception

- **person perception:** how we come to know about others' temporary states, emotions, intentions and desires
 - impression formation
 - attribution

Impression Formation

- integrating sources of information about others into a unified and consistent judgment
- decide very quickly based on minimal information

What information do we use?

- roles
- physical cues
 - appearance and behavior



What information do we use?

- **salience:** stimuli that stand out against a background
- bright, noisy, moving, novel characteristics attract our attention

What information do we use?

context effects:

- contrast: perception of increased difference from the context
- assimilation: perception of increased similarity to the context

What information do we use?

- we quickly move from observations to infer personality traits
 - more economic (simpler)
 - automatic
- Asch:
 - central traits—dominant
 - peripheral traits—less important
 - e.g., warm-cold

What information do we use?

implicit personality theory:

assumptions and naïve belief system about which traits and behaviors go together

categorization:

perceive individuals as group members

What information do we use?

continuum model of impression formation:

- category-based, stereotypical impressions
- careful and systematic processing of information for individuated impressions
- *dual-processing*

Dual Processing

- describe two basic ways of thinking about social stimuli involving:
 1. automatic, effortless thinking
 2. more deliberate, effortful thinking

Dual Processing

Implicit cognitions: judgments or decisions that are under the control of automatically activated evaluations occurring without our awareness. Unintentional thinking which uses few cognitive resources. Operates quickly and cannot deal with new problems.

Explicit cognitions: deliberate judgments or decisions of which we are consciously aware. Intentional, effortful and flexible when dealing with new problems. Consumes considerable cognitive resources.

Integrating Impressions

- **negativity effect:** negative traits given more weight in evaluations
- **positivity bias:** tend to evaluate people in a favorable light
 - “rose colored glasses”
- **primacy / recency effects:** first / last bits of information carries more weight
- **emotional expressions** also influence our impressions

Integrating Impressions

evaluative consistency

- view people as consistently good / bad even when contradictions exist
- **halo effect** - I like Ayca so I think she has a great number of good qualities
- how do we resolve inconsistencies?

Integrating Impressions: Schemas

Schemas - organized, structured sets of cognitions that include:

- knowledge about an object
- relationships among its attributes
- specific examples

- role schemas: professor, receptionist, devoted lover...

Schemas

- **stereotypes:** beliefs about typical characteristics of members of a group
- **prototypes:** the abstract ideal of a schema
- **exemplars:** particular instances of a category (that we met)

Integrating Impressions

motivated person perception:

- our goals and feelings about another person influence the information we gather
- forming impressions, anticipate future interactions, need for accuracy, prior expectations / experiences, outcome dependency etc.
- our cognitive and emotional state also matters

Making Attributions

- **Attribution** is the process where people use information to infer causes of behaviors or events
- How / when do people ask “why?”
- Fritz Heider - people need to:
 - understand (form coherent view of) the world
 - gain control of their environment
- Especially unexpected & negative events

Making Attributions

- Dispositional (Internal) Attributions:
 - explains the cause as being internal to actor
 - refers to traits, attitudes, personality, enduring internal states
- Situational (External) Attributions:
 - explains the cause as being external to actor
 - refers to actions of others, luck, nature of situation

Making Attributions

Correspondent Inference: an inference where the actor's action corresponds to a stable personality characteristic

Jones & Davis

Rules to make corresponding inferences:

- the social desirability of the behavior
- actor's degree of choice
- actions that produce *noncommon effects*
- behaviors not part of a social role

Making Attributions

Kelley's **Covariation Model**:

- do a particular cause and a particular effect go together across situations? how?
- 3 pieces of information:
 - **consistency**: Does Elif always behave like this towards the object?
 - **consensus**: Do other people have similar responses as Elif?
 - **distinctiveness**: Does Elif behave like this towards other similar objects?

Why did Elif laugh at cmymz?

Distinctiveness	Consensus	Consistency	ATTRIBUTION
HIGH-she didn't laugh at anyone else	HIGH-everyone else laughed	HIGH-she always laughs at him	Stimulus (the comedian)
LOW-she always laughs at comedians	LOW-hardly anyone else laughed	HIGH-she always laughs at him	Person (Elif)
HIGH-she didn't laugh at anyone else	LOW-hardly anyone else laughed	LOW-she rarely laughs at him	Context (drunk?)

Biases in Attributions

fundamental attribution error:

- overestimate the impact of dispositional causes,
- underestimate the impact of situational causes on others' behaviors
- e.g., personality rather than situation
- cultural differences

Biases in Attributions

actor-observer effect: tendency to attribute:

- our own behavior to external/situational causes, but
- others' behavior to internal/dispositional causes
- Why?
 - perceptual: actors look at situation, observers look at actors
 - access to different information

Biases in Attributions

- How would you explain a poor grade on a test?
- How about a good grade?

self-serving bias:

- take credit for own success
 - deny responsibility for failures
- (also occurs for in-groups)

Biases in Attributions

- false consensus effect:** we see our own behavior/opinions as typical
- biased sample of others (i.e., friends)
 - own opinions more accessible
 - motivated to see ourselves as good & normal
 - false uniqueness

Biases in Attributions

- biases - cognitive shortcuts
- meet our needs and motives (self-esteem, perceived control)
- Remember *dual processing*?
 1. automatic and simple attributions occur first
 2. deliberate, systematic, and effortful attributions come latercorrect for biases like fae

Accuracy of Judgments

- accurate about external, visible attributes
- not so much for inferred, invisible states (e.g., personality, feelings)
- pragmatic accuracy
- fairly accurate about emotional state

Facial expressions

- Seven primary emotions:
 - Anger
 - Disgust
 - Fear
 - Happiness
 - Surprise
 - Sadness
 - Contempt
- *Survival value* hypothesis

Non-verbal communication

- **non-verbal behaviors:** communicate substantial amount of info
- send and receive info using gestures, expressions, vocal cues, body movements rather than words
- *visible* channel:
 - facial expressions, gestures, posture, appearance, distance, eye contact
- *paralinguistic* qualities: variations in speech other than verbal content
 - pitch, amplitude, voice quality of speech, length of answers, number of pronouns etc.

Body movement and non-conscious mimicry

- angry / threatening displays > angular and diagonal body & arm movements
- warm / welcoming displays > rounded
- culture influences displays and interpretations of non-verbal behavior
- **non-conscious mimicry**: adopting the behaviors, postures of interaction partners without conscious awareness or intention

Body movement and non-conscious mimicry

- culture and gender influence the expression of nv cues
- **social role:** socially defined expectations that individuals in a given situation are expected to fulfill
- social role theory > different roles occupied by men and women in society
 - smiling, extravagant expressiveness & manly emotion, types of emotions, decoding nvb

Deception

- deception and non-verbal leakage
 - true emotions tend to “leak” out through nonverbal channels
- some nonverbal channels leak more because they are *less controllable*
 - e.g., the body versus the face versus words
- liars:
 - blink more, hesitate more, more speech errors, higher-pitch voices, more dilated pupils
- e.g. lie to me