The Dialectic Between the Person and the Environment

Lecture 32
The Dialectic Between the Person and the Environment

Three Dialectics in Social Behavior
Social Influence Extends Beyond Overt Behavior

• Social Influence (G. Allport, 1954)
  – “[H]ow the thought, feeling and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of other human beings”

• Internal States and Dispositions
  – Thoughts, Beliefs, Feelings, Desires
  – Traits, Attitudes, Values
Persuasive Communication
Janis et al. (1965)

• Subjects Read Opinion Essays
  – Express “Pro” or “Con” Attitude
    • Government Funding for Cancer Cure
    • Increased Military Funding
    • Federal Program for Moon Landing
    • Prohibition of 3-D Movies

• Rate Agreement with Essay
  – Snack or No Snack While Reading
Agreement with Argument
Janis et al. (1965)

% Agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Cancer</th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Moon</th>
<th>3D Movies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Snack</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
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</table>

Legend:
- Control
- Snack

Topic

5
Interpersonal Attraction
Berscheid & Walster (1978)

• “Liking Someone” as an Attitude
  – Internal Mental State

• Target Characteristics
  – Physical Attractiveness
  – Competence
  – Similarity

• Situational Influences
  – Proximity
Propinquity and Classroom Friendships
Segal (1974)

• Police Academy Students
  – Housed, Seated Alphabetically
• Survey After Training
  – 3 Closest Friends on Force
• Reciprocation Rate
  – Neighbor, 74%
  – Non-Neighbor, 42%

“Propinquity Contributes to Positive Affect.”
Friendship Patterns

• As Function of Distance
  – Within Town
  – Within Living Unit
  – Within Classroom, Workplace
• Functional Rather than Physical Distance
  – Availability
• Availability Means Exposure
  – Familiarity Breeds Liking, Not Contempt
The Mere Exposure Effect
Zajonc (1968)

• Subjects Taught to Pronounce Unfamiliar, Meaningless Material
  – “Turkish” Words
  – “Chinese” Ideographs

• Vary Number of Trials
  – 0 (Control) to 25 Exposures

• Items Identified as Adjectives
  – Guess Meaning
    • “Something Good”
    • “Something Bad”
The Mere Exposure Effect
Zajonc (1968)

0-6 "Goodness" Rating

Frequency of Exposure

"Turkish"
"Chinese"
The Mere Exposure Effect
Zajonc (1968)

- Repeated Exposure Increases Judgments of Likability
  - Even in Absence of Substantive Contact
- Likability is an Expression of Preference
  - Preference is an Attitude
- Exposure is a Purely Situational Effect
  - Prefer Whatever is Encountered Frequently in the Environment
Facial Image Preference
Mita et al. (1977)

• Facial Photographs of Women
  - Original
  - Mirror-Reversed

• Acquaintance Should Prefer Original
  – As S/he Usually Sees Her

• Person Should Prefer Mirror Reversal
  – As She Sees Herself in Mirror
Preference of Targets and Acquaintances

Mita et al. (1977)

Study 1

Study 2

Subject

% Preference

Self

Friend

Self

Partner

Photo Image

True

Reversal
The Dialectic Between the Person and the Environment

Three Dialectics in Social Behavior

“Situations are as much a function of the person as the person’s behavior is a function of the situation.”

K.S. Bowers (1973)
How People Affect Their Environments

Buss (1987); Kihlstrom & Cantor (1987)

• Evocation
  – Mere Presence, Appearance in Environment
    • Independent of Any Behavior

• Selection
  – Choose Environments for Some Purpose

• Behavioral Manipulation
  – Overt Behavior

• Cognitive Transformation
  – Covert Mental Activity
How People Affect Their Environments

Buss (1987); Kihlstrom & Cantor (1987)

• Evocation
  – Mere Presence in Environment Alters Environment
    • Independent of Any Behavior
    • Physical Appearance
  – Evoke Behavior from Others
    • Intentional or Unintentional
    • Conscious or Unconscious
Examples of Evocation

• “Mere Presence” Effects
  – Social Facilitation
  – Social Inhibition

• Gender-Role Socialization
  – Male/Female External Genitalia
  – Sociocultural Standards for Gender Role
    • Masculinity
    • Femininity
Baby X
Seavey et al. (1975)

- Nonparent Adults
  - Study of Infants’ Responses to Strangers
- Interact with 3-Month-Old Girl
- Identification by Gender and Name
  - Boy
  - Girl
  - Neutral
Choice of Toy
Seavey et al. (1975)

Frequency of Choice

Toy

Identification

Boy
Neutral
Girl
Physical Contact
Seavey et al. (1975)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th># of Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender of Subject

Male
Female

Identification

- Boy
- Neutral
- Girl
Baby X Revisited  
Sidorowicz & Lunney (1980)

• Nonparent Undergraduates  
  – Study of Infants’ Responses to Strangers
• Interact with 3-Month-Old Child  
  – Used Infants of Both Sexes
• Identification by Gender and Name  
  – Boy  
  – Girl  
  – Neutral
Choice of Toy
Sidorowicz & Lunney (1980)

Toy

% Choosing

Identification

Boy
Neutral
Girl

Football
Doll
Teething Ring
Stereotyping and Prejudice

• Stereotypes
  – Social Categories Marked by Physical, Social-Demographic Attributes
    • Race, Ethnicity, National Origin
    • Sex (Gender)
    • Socioeconomic, Educational Status

• Evoke Prejudicial Behavior from Others
  – Ingroup vs. Outgroup
How People Affect Their Environments
Buss (1987); Kihlstrom & Cantor (1987)

• Evocation

• Selection
  – Choose Environments to Match Personality
  – Support, Promote Interests, Moods, Beliefs, Desires
  – Each Choice Preempts Alternatives
## Personality and Mate Preference

Buss (1987)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Trait</th>
<th>Preference in Mate ($r$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>.58</td>
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</table>
Selection of Environment

• Not Darwinian Selection by Environment
• Selection of Environment is Ubiquitous
  – Every Choice Changes Environment
• Social Roles
  – Change Environment in Which Role is Played
• Source of Choice
  – Choices Made by Individual for Him/Herself
  – Choices Made for Individual by Others
How People Affect Their Environments

Buss (1987); Kihlstrom & Cantor (1987)

• Evocation
• Selection

• Behavioral Manipulation
  – Overt Behavior
    • Alters Objective Environment
      – As Publicly Experienced by Everyone
  – Instrumental/Operant Behavior
    • Operation Changes Environment
# The Prisoner’s Dilemma

Luce & Raiffa (1957), after Tucker (1950)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prisoner A</th>
<th>Prisoner B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Stays Silent** | **Stays Silent** | 1 Year for A  
| 1 Year for B | 10 Years for A  
| 3 Months for B | 3 Months for A  
| 10 Years for B | 8 Years for A  
| **Confesses** | **Confesses** | 3 Months for A  
| 10 Years for B | 8 Years for A  
| 8 Years for B | 8 Years for B |
Behavioral Assimilation of Cooperators to Competitors
Kelley & Stahelski (1970)

Cooperative Actors

% Cooperation by Actor

Cooperative Competitive Cooperative Competitive

Competitive Actors

Trial Block

Partner

Cooperative Competitive Cooperative Competitive

% Cooperation by Actor

Trial Block

Partner
Situational Influences on Delay of Gratification
Mischel & Ebbesen (1970)

Waiting Time (min)

Study

Reward Present
- None
- Preferred
- Nonpreferred
- Both

1 2

30
What Do “High-Delay” Children Do?
Mischel et al., (1989)

• Avoid Deliberately Looking at Rewards
  – Covering Eyes with Hands
  – Resting Heads on Arms
• Generate Own Diversions
  – Talk/Sing Quietly to Themselves
  – Create Games with Hands/Feet
  – Try to Sleep

In Other Words, They Manipulate the Situation Through Their Overt Behavior
Overt Self-Distraction in Delay of Gratification
Mischel, Ebbesen, & Zeiss (1972), Exp. 1

Contingent
Type of Waiting

Waiting Time (min)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Distraction
None
Slinky
How People Affect Their Environments

Buss (1987); Kihlstrom & Cantor (1987)

• Evocation
• Selection
• Manipulation
• Transformation (Cognitive)
  – Alters Mental Representation of Environment
    • Environment as Subjectively Experienced by Actor
    • Not Environment as Publicly Observed by Others
Overt and Covert Self-Distraction in Delay of Gratification

Mischel, Ebbesen, & Zeiss (1972), Exp. 1

![Graph showing waiting time (min) vs. type of waiting (Distraction: None, Slinky, "Fun" Thoughts)]
Ideation in Delay of Gratification
Mischel & Baker (1975)

**Consummatory**

- Look at the marshmallows. They are sweet and chewy and soft. When you look at marshmallows, think about how sweet they are when you eat them.... When you look at marshmallows, think about how soft and sticky they are in your mouth when you eat them....
- Look at the pretzels; they are crunchy and salty. When you look at pretzels, think about how crunchy they are. When you look at pretzels, think about how salty they taste when you lick them or chew them....

**Transformative**

- When you look at marshmallows, think about how white and puffy they are. Clouds are white and puffy too -- when you look at marshmallows, think about clouds.... The moon is round and white. When you look at marshmallows, think about the moon....
- When you look at pretzels you can think about how long and brown they are. A log is long and brown. When you look at pretzels, think about logs and tree trunks. Or you can think about how round and tall they are. A pole is round and tall....
Ideation in Delay of Gratification

Mischel & Baker (1975)

![Bar chart showing waiting times for consummatory and transformational types of waiting. The chart compares relevant versus irrelevant conditions, with a control group indicated.]
Objective and Subjective Environments

• General Tendencies are Not Strong Predictors of Actual Behavior in Specific Situations
  – Actual Behavior is also Determined by Specific Details of the Evoking Situation

• The Situation is Not Independent of the Person
  – People can Manipulate the Objective Situation Through Their Overt Behavior
  – People can Transform the Subjective Situation Through Mental Operations
    • Cognitive, Emotional, Motivational Strategies
Rosa Parks in Montgomery
Martin Luther King in Birmingham
Pygmalion in the Classroom
Rosenthal & Jacobson (1968)

![Graph showing IQ gain for Late-Bloomers and Controls in 1st and 2nd Grade.](image)

Pygmalion & Galatea, From Hamilton, Mythology
The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy
Merton (1947, 1958)

"Definitions of a situation... become an integral part of the situation and thus affect subsequent developments....

The self-fulfilling prophecy is, in the beginning, a false definition of the situation evoking a new behavior which makes the originally false conception come true.

The specious validity of the self-fulfilling prophecy perpetuates a reign of error. For the prophet will cite the actual course of events as proof that he was right from the very beginning.

Such are the perversities of social logic.”

• Behavioral Confirmation
• Perceptual Confirmation
Complexity in Personality and Social Interaction

$$B = f(P, E)$$

- **Simple System**
  - Components are Independent
  - Unidirectional Causation

- **Complex System**
  - Components Interact
  - Bidirectional Causation