Attraction and Close Relationships

- The Rules of Attraction
- Types of Relationships
  - Relationship Taxonomies
- Relationship Stability and Satisfaction
  - Thibaut & Kelley’s Interdependence Theory
  - Rusbult’s Investment Model
- Attachment as an Organizational Framework for CR’s
- Paper Presentations – Shannon, Marsheena

The “Rules” of Attraction

Who we like depends on:

- The social context
  - Proximity: Liking those nearby
  - Familiarity: Liking those we see often
- Attributes of the other person
  - Attractiveness: Liking beautiful people
- Matching phenomena
  - Reciprocity: Liking people who like us
  - Similarity: Liking people like us

Attraction: The social context

- Proximity: Liking those nearby
  - Festinger et al. (1950) - MIT dorm study
  - “Which 3 people do you see socially most often?”
    - 41% chose next door neighbors
    - 22% chose someone two doors down
    - 10% chose someone at end of halls
- Familiarity: Liking those we are more aware of
  - Hartley (1946): Danerians, Wallonians and Pinerians
  - Zajonc (1968): Mere exposure effect
    - Limits to mere exposure effect
No denying it, we like attractive people more.

For women:
- Large eyes
- Prominent cheekbones
- Narrow cheeks
- Small chin
- Small nose

For men:
- Large eyes
- Prominent cheekbones
- Broad jaw
- Broad forehead

“Physical Attractiveness
No denying it, we like attractive people more.

“What is beautiful is good” (Dion, Berscheid & Walster, 1972)

Based on attractiveness, we also infer:
- Person is socially competent
- Person has good personality
- Person is intelligent

We also find “averaged” faces to be attractive

“Averaged” faces
This is a composite of 64 female faces
Physical Attractiveness

- No denying it, we like attractive people more.
- “What is beautiful is good” (Dion, Berscheid & Walster, 1972)
  - Based on attractiveness, we also infer -
    - Person is socially competent
    - Person has good personality
    - Person is intelligent
- We also find “averaged” faces to be attractive
  - Could be due to symmetry
  - Could also be due to familiarity

Matching Phenomena

- Reciprocity: Liking others who like us
  - Duh. (but it’s a really big effect… Kenny, 1994)
- DISSimilarity: DISliking others who are NOT like us
  - Newcomb (1961) - U Michigan roommate study
  - Byrne (1971) - “phantom other” technique
  - Rosenbaum (1986) - replicated Byrne with control group
- (Dis)similarity effect is most like due to the anticipation of reciprocity (Condon & Crano, 1988)

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Liking vs. Loving

- Early attraction researchers assumed that liking and loving were attitudes that differed only in magnitude.
- Rubin (1970) was the first to empirically demonstrate the difference between liking and loving.
- Scores on “Love Scale” but not “Liking Scale” were correlated with self-reports of loving a dating partner
- “Love Scale” but not “Liking Scale” differentiated between opposite-sex dating partners and same-sex friends.

Items from Liking Scale

- I think that ___ is unusually well-adjusted.
- ___ is an exceptionally mature person.
- I have great confidence in ___’s good judgment.
- ___ is one of the most likable people I know.
- Most people would react very favorably to ___ after a brief acquaintance.
**Items from Loving Scale**

- I feel I can confide in __ about virtually anything.
- I would do almost anything for ___.
- If I could never be with ___, I would feel miserable.
- If I were lonely, my first thought would be to seek ___ out.
- I feel responsible for ___’s well-being.

**How Do I Love Thee? Let Me Count the Ways**

- Lee (1973) identified 6 different “love styles”:
  - Romantic love - all-consuming emotionally, physically.
  - Possessive love - characterized by jealousy.
  - Best-friend love - companionship, emotional intimacy.
  - Pragmatic love - satisfies basic, practical needs.
  - Altruistic love - unconditional caring for another.
  - Game-playing love - lasts until someone else comes along.
- Fehr & Russell (1991) did better - identified 93 types of love.

**Sternberg’s Triangular Theory of Love**

- Sternberg (1986) argued that 3 dimensions underlie the many different forms of love.
  - Intimacy - Feelings of closeness, connectedness
  - Commitment - Decision to stay together
  - Passion - Intense emotions, physical attraction, sexuality
- Sternberg theorizes that 3 dimensions have different time courses and underlying mechanisms
  - E.g., relationships based on only 1 element less likely to survive than those based on 2 or more elements.
Sternberg’s Triangular Theory of Love

- **Intimacy**
  - Liking
  - Romantic Love
  - Companionate Love
- **Passion**
  - Infatuation
  - Empty Love
- **Commitment**

Relationship Taxonomies

- Blumstein & Kollock (1988) identified five dimensions on which to understand types of social relationships.
  - Kin v. non-kin
  - Sexual/romantic v. nonsexual/nonromantic
  - Cohabiting v. non-cohabitating
  - Heirarchical v. egalitarian
  - Cross-sex v. same-sex

- Clark & Mills (1979) outlines two types of relationships -
  - Communal: benefits are given in response to need
    - Ex: close friends, family, romantic partners
  - Exchange: benefits are given with expectation of return
    - Ex: new acquaintances, business or task-oriented relations

Do principles generalize across type?

- Clark & Mills (1979) examined how “returning a favor” influenced attraction in exchange v. communal relationships.
  - Exchange: Returning favor is good
  - Communal: Returning favor is bad
Relationship Stability and Satisfaction

Most studies of relationship stability focus on dating and marital relationships.
- Historically, assumption was that satisfaction -> stability
- Most SP theories take a “social exchange” approach
  - Behavior is repeated if it is rewarding
  - Fundamental dynamic of relationships are partner’s exchange of rewards and costs

Interdependence Theory
(Thibaut & Kelley, 1959)

- Social interaction involves the exchange and coordination of outcomes between interdependent partners.
- Outcomes include:
  - Rewards: love, money, status, information, goods, services
  - Costs: time, energy, conflict, other’s disapproval

How Do We Evaluate Our Outcomes?
(Thibaut & Kelley, 1959)

- Comparison level (CL)
  - Outcome we think we deserve in this relationship
- Comparison level for alternatives (CL\text{ALT})
  - Best possible outcome we can get outside of relationship
- Satisfaction determined by outcome vs. CL
  - If outcome > CL, we are satisfied
  - If outcome < CL, we are dissatisfied
- Stability determined by outcome vs. CL\text{ALT}
  - If outcome > CL\text{ALT}, we stay in relationship
  - If outcome < CL\text{ALT}, we go elsewhere
**Interdependence Theory**  
(Thibaut & Kelley, 1959)

- **Rewards**
- **Costs**
- **CL**

**Relationship Satisfaction**

**Relationship Stability**

**Investment Model**  
(Rusbult, 1983)

- Many people do not leave partners even when dissatisfied and other alternatives look bright. Why?
- Investment model adds two “tweaks” -
  - Commitment, not satisfaction, is what directly predicts stability
  - Person’s investment in relationship predicts commitment
- Investments are anything a person has put into relationship, that would be lost if he/she leaves it.
  - Financial resources, possessions
  - Children, mutual friendships
  - Time and energy spent building relationship