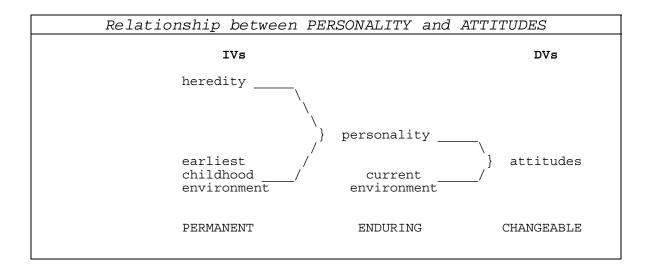# UNIT 13: SOCIAL

QUESTION #13.1: What are attitudes?

Social psychology is the branch studying individuals in a macro interpersonal environment, how they respond to interpersonal and institutional stimuli. One topic within social psychology would be **attitudes, which are defined as learned habits for responding to social stimuli**. Attitudes must not be confused with personality traits. Attitudes are not as permanent or as consistent as personality traits. Traits are supposed to be characteristic of the individual, regardless of the situation. Attitudes are more influenced by the situation. The relationship between attitudes and personality traits is seen below.

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│           Relationship between PERSONALITY and ATTITUDES           │
├──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│                                                                    │
│              IVs                                    DVs            │
│                                                                    │
│         heredity _____\                                           │
│                         \                                          │
│                          \                                         │
│                           } personality _____\                    │
│                          /                      \                  │
│         earliest        /                        } attitudes       │
│         childhood ____/         current _____/                    │
│         environment           environment                         │
│                                                                    │
│                                                                    │
│         PERMANENT              ENDURING          CHANGEABLE         │
│                                                                    │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

The common use of the term "attitude" often fails to appreciate this distinction. Whenever you hear someone say "He has a bad attitude" (if it is about everything, it is not an attitude contingent upon the object, it is an enduring trait of the subject).

PERSONALITY IS TRAITS.
(enduring, integrated)

ATTITUDES ARE SOCIAL HABITS.
(changeable, diverse)

An attitude is always about a specific thing, and describes the subject's understanding of that thing, the emotional evaluation of that thing, and his predisposition to act in a certain way toward that thing. So, each attitude can be dissected into three components: cognitive, affective, and behavioral.

The **cognitive component** refers to the subject's belief about the thing in question. Here we are not talking about religious beliefs (which are doctrines about God and salvation) but **beliefs as factual statements that are empirically testable**. For example, "I believe that it is now about 73 degrees Fahrenheit in this room" is a belief in the sense of being a statement about my acceptance of a certain claim of fact. We could empirically verify the statement by getting a thermometer. Notice that my belief about the temperature in this room (unlike my religious doctrines) will frequently change when new information is supplied. I might readjust my estimate upward if I notice that I am perspiring, or if someone shows me a different thermometer with a reading of 76 degrees.

The **affective component** is how I feel about the thing in question. This might be the **emotions** I experience when I am in the presence of the thing, or even start to think about it. The affective component can also refer to how I evaluate the thing in question, especially how it fits into a larger scheme of **preferences, priorities and values**. Note that ethical and moral judgments should not be referred to as "beliefs" (because they are not empirically verifiable). Moral judgments are not based upon facts, but values, and are therefore part of the affective component of the attitude.

The **behavioral component** refers to what the subject tends to do in the presence of the thing. When it comes to attitudes about political candidates or issues, the corresponding behavior is how you **vote** or to which side you might contribute your time or money. When it comes to attitudes about products and companies, the behavioral component is the consumer's decision to **purchase** the product.

Case Study: Ms. I, 18, has a strong attitude on the topic of abortion. She describes herself as Pro-Life (anti-abortion). Here is how her attitude could be diagramed into the three components.

Ms. I has an *unfavorable* attitude toward abortion.

COGNITIVE COMPONENT: Ms. I *believes* that the process of abortion results in the death of the fetus.

AFFECTIVE COMPONENT: Ms. I greatly *values* all human life, and says that it is *morally wrong* to kill the innocent. Ms. I accepts the doctrine of her Church that the protection of the life of the fetus is a higher *priority* than the right of the pregnant woman to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. When Ms. I thinks about the dead aborted fetus, she *feels* very sad, but also angry.

BEHAVIORAL COMPONENT: Ms. I has *participated* in several anti-abortion demonstrations. When an election comes up, she *votes* for Pro-Life candidates. If Ms. I were to become pregnant, she would not get an abortion herself.

Case Study: Mr. B, age 53, is an international businessman. He must fly between California and Mexico about a dozen times a year. He has tried just about every airline on that route, but his experiences and

priorities have made him brand loyal to Volaris. Here is how we could diagram his attitude.

Mr. B has a *favorable* attitude toward Volaris.

COGNITIVE COMPONENT: Mr. B *believes* that Volaris has the highest percentage of on time flights.
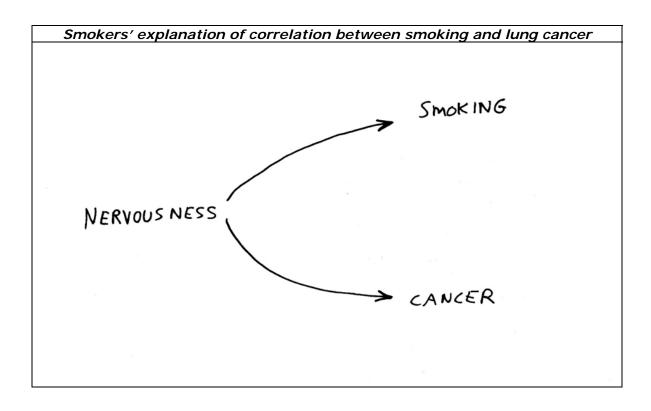
AFFECTIVE COMPONENT: Mr. B *prefers* to arrive at his destination on time. This punctuality is his *priority* when he selects an airline. He so greatly *values* this feature, that he would pay more for a ticket on an airline with a better on time record. When Mr. B arrives on time, he is *calm*. When he even thinks that he might arrive late, he gets very *nervous*.

BEHAVIORAL COMPONENT: Mr. B goes to the Volaris website and *purchases* a ticket.

In the examples above, all three components of the attitude are consistent. When they are not, the individual perceives a frustrating situation known as cognitive dissonance. Leon **Festinger** studied **cognitive dissonance** and found that when the individual components of an attitude disagree, belief may be the weakest of the three, and **people may change what they believe in order to match what they do.**

In 1954 the first Surgeon General's report about the dangers of cigarette smoking was issued. These were correlational data pointing out the link between smoking and lung cancer. While most smokers do not end up getting lung cancer, most cases of lung cancer are found in smokers. In the wake of this report, national polling organizations asked Americans if they believed that smoking caused cancer. Most non-smokers agreed that it did, and cited the Surgeon General's report as convincing evidence. Most smokers who were surveyed did not accept the causal inference, but suggested an alternative explanation for the correlation: "Maybe people get cancer because they are more nervous, and nervous people have a greater need to smoke." This is a plausible version of an explanation of spurious correlation due to collateral effects.

(The actual causal link was not verified for another decade. Then experimenters forced dogs to smoke the equivalent of two packs of cigarettes a day in order to show that smoking greatly increases the risk of lung cancer.)

Smokers' explanation of correlation between smoking and lung cancer

```
                                        SMOKING

       NERVOUS NESS

                                        CANCER
```

Research on cognitive dissonance	
Researcher(s)	Festinger
Subjects	Adults who responded to a poll
Type of research	Survey
Independent Variable	Whether or not the respondent was a smoker (but if this is a choice, it is a DV).
Factors held Constant	All persons received the same information: the Surgeon General's report about the correlation between smoking and cancer
Dependent Variable	Whether or not the respondent inferred a causal link between smoking and cancer.
Results	Smokers were less likely to infer that smoking was the cause of cancer
Conclusion	Smokers would experience cognitive dissonance if they believed that smoking caused cancer, and therefore rejected this belief rather than changed their smoking behavior.

What is more important in the development of the topic of cognitive dissonance is how Festinger interpreted the poll data. He inferred that smokers had greater resistance to the belief that smoking causes cancer because it would place them in a state of cognitive dissonance. We can assume that smokers and non-smokers alike have a similar affective

component (i.e., a preference for health and a long life). When the smoker hears evidence suggesting that smoking might cause cancer (cognitive component) he can either stop smoking (change the behavioral component) or he can reject the causal link. Since smoking is physically addictive, most smokers choose to minimize their acknowledgement of the risk rather than change their behavior.

Another example of Festinger's research on cognitive dissonance comes from an experiment he did on college students who had volunteered to participate in a study. When the students arrived, they went into a room where they had to work individually on a rather boring task (thinking that their performance was the dependent variable being measured). When the students were done, they were asked to go out and talk to another student about volunteering for the experiment. Specifically, the students who had just performed the boring task were asked to describe the boring task as somewhat interesting. Half of the students were told that they would be paid twenty dollars for talking to the next student, but the other half of the students were told that they would be paid only a dollar. Later, all of the original students were debriefed and asked if they honestly thought that the task was boring. Almost all of the group paid twenty dollars agreed that the task was boring.

```
      STIMULUS                  ORGANISM                    RESPONSE
 ===============          ==============            ================
 = student paid =         =             =           = student comes =
 = only a dollar=         =             =           = to regard  the=
 = to describe a=========>= student    ============>= task as being =
 = task as      =         =             =           = interesting   =
 = interesting  =         =             =           =               =
 ===============          ==============            ================
```

Research on cognitive dissonance	
Researcher(s)	Festinger
Subjects	College students
Type of research	Experiment
Independent Variable	Whether subjects were paid $20 or $1 to describe a boring task as interesting
Factors held Constant	All students performed the same boring task
Dependent Variable	What the students reported that they really thought about the task when being debriefed
Results	Students who were paid more were more likely to think that the task was really boring
Ethical Considerations	The students were forced to do a boring task and then encouraged to deceive other students about the nature of the task
Conclusion	The students who were paid less experienced a cognitive dissonance, and resolved it by changing their belief about whether or not the task was boring.

Festinger inferred that they had justified their lying by telling themselves "At least I am getting twenty dollars for saying this." However, many of the students who had only been paid one dollar for describing the task as interesting subsequently reported that the task really was somewhat interesting. Festinger inferred that these subjects could not justify lying for just a dollar, so they must have convinced themselves that they were actually telling the truth when they described the task as interesting.

The tendency of consumers and voters to retrospectively regard their decisions with greater confidence might also be explained by cognitive dissonance. After the behavior (the purchase or the vote) was accomplished, the reasons for it look more clear and compelling than before. The polls that were done before the 2000 presidential election in Mexico indicated that it would be a close one. Many voters were relatively undecided up to the last minute. Potential voters were asked to rate the favorability of Labastida, Fox, and Cardenas, on a five point scale: very favorable, somewhat favorable, neutral, somewhat unfavorable, very unfavorable. The mean favorability ratings were pretty close. Right after Fox's victory in the election, the survey was repeated and his favorability ratings jumped, especially among those who admitted to having voted for Fox. Before the election, voters had thought "maybe Fox would be a little better" and after they had finally voted for Fox they thought "I know I did the right thing, Fox is definitely much better."

Another application of cognitive dissonance occurs in the case of effort justification. The more someone invests time, money, or effort, the more he is convinced that he made the wise choice, and that his efforts were worth it. A child who has to work and save for a bicycle will value it more, and take better care of it, than if the bicycle was given to him as a gift, with no effort on his own part.

Persuasion is the attempt to change attitudes. Persuasion can target any of the attitudinal components: cognitive, affective or behavioral. Just focusing on objective information (focusing on the cognitive component) will probably only be effective if the audience already agrees with the values and finds the behaviors otherwise acceptable. A message that focuses on values that the audience already holds can be very effective in spurring them to action. According to the cognitive dissonance theory, the best way to change certain behaviors would be to get the audience doing something, and their hearts and minds will follow. This is why getting someone to invest the time and effort to attend a political rally is one of the best ways of making sure that he will convince himself that the candidate is really worth voting for: "He was worth going to that rally for, so he is definitely worth voting for." In the 2000 election in Spain, Prime Minister Aznar, who was generally known for his promptness, would intentionally make his audiences wait at least half an hour for his appearances, hoping that it would build their sense of commitment: "I waited a long time to see him, he must be good."

Dogmatic attitudes are those that are most rigid and intolerant. Therefore, they are more resistant to persuasion. The word "dogma" comes from religion, and refers to a core of doctrine that should not be questioned. However, when this principle is applied to attitudes

about groups of people, the result can be problems in social perception: stereotyping, prejudice, scapegoating, and discrimination.

Stereotypes are the cognitive component of attitudes about types of people (or other things). **Stereotypes are in the form of generalizations** that may (or may not) be based upon statistics such as averages or correlations. The problem arises when the subject overgeneralizes, and starts treating individuals in those classes as if all members of the class had the trait. To say that the crime rate is higher among African American males than it is among White males may be verifiable if we look at the averages. However, if I conclude that all African Americans are criminals, then I have accepted a stereotype that can lead to prejudice, scapegoating and discrimination. Many stereotypes are not even based upon averages or correlations, but upon a handful of isolated, emotionalized examples that fit the individual's **confirmation bias**. "They arrested another criminal. His picture is in the paper, another Black man."

Profiling based upon stereotypes		
	Passenger is a terrorist	
	Yes	No
Middle Eastern males	Very few passengers (but most terrorists)	Most Middle Eastern males going through the airport
All other passengers	Extremely rare	Most passengers

Stereotypes are at the core of much of profiling used by law enforcement agencies. Decisions about whether or not to use profiling should be based upon valid statistical models. For example, should airport security personnel randomly select passengers for thorough searches, or should young, Middle Eastern males be targeted for searches?

When the airport screeners select the 70 year old grandmother or the couple traveling with an infant, this is almost certainly a waste of time. The only purpose of searching these passengers is to send a message: anyone might be searched. By focusing on the profile of the

Middle Eastern male, the screeners would be more likely to catch most of the terrorists, however over 99 percent of the Middle Eastern males flying would be innocent, targeted only because of the stereotype. Such profiling might also convince other terrorists (e.g., another Tim McVeigh or another Manson family) that the opportunity exists for airline terrorism. It could also convince Middle Eastern males planning terrorist activities to try some other technique.

Scapegoating is the process of blaming an individual or an entire class of people for problems of which they are innocent. Some players on a losing sports team may try to scapegoat one player, "If you hadn't made that bad play in the second quarter." The Irish joke that the English brought the fleas. Perhaps the most severe example of scapegoating occurred in Germany in the 1930s. This proud, industrious, well educated nation had suffered a great series of setbacks: losing the First World War, hyperinflation in the 1920's, the Great Depression and massive unemployment starting in 1929, and political instability in the early 1930s. One party rose to power based upon effective use of scapegoating. The National Socialist German Workers Party (the Nazis) claimed that all the problems of Germany could be blamed on the three percent of the population that was Jewish. *Why did we lose the war? Our soldiers fought bravely at the front! It must be those Jewish diplomats who sold us out during the peace talks. Why did we have the inflation? The Jewish bankers! Why did we have unemployment? The Jewish industrialists! Why do we have political instability? The Jewish radicals! Pornography? The Jewish writings, artists, and film directors!* As far-fetched as these claims may seem, Hitler was not the first or the last to use these **Anti-Semitic** (anti-Jewish) claims. In the Middle Ages, the Jews were blamed for the plague. Some current Middle Eastern leaders may blame the Jews for poverty in the Arab world. One explanation for these attempts at scapegoating is that leaders might be trying to distract the people from the real causes of their problems, and/or trying to use public wrath against the scapegoats to consolidate political power.

Prejudice refers to an attitude held without sufficient evidence. Prejudice usually refers to attitudes about other classes of people, usually unfavorable attitudes. Most prejudice is at least in part based upon stereotypes, scapegoating and other dogmatic attitudes. Allport and Adler described the dynamics of prejudice and scapegoating: subjects try to feel better about themselves by denigrating someone else. Sixty years ago, Milton **Rokeach** found that in the South, White prejudice against African Americans was inversely related to socio-economic class. It was the poor Whites who were most opposed to integration. This was to some extent a fear of competing with African Americans in the workplace, but also it related to the frame of mind "I may be poor, but at least I am White." If poor Whites accepted the idea that Blacks were not inferior, then there was nothing special about being White.

Research on Prejudice	
Researcher(s)	Rokeach
Subjects	Southern whites
Type of research	Survey
Independent Variable	Social class
Factors held Constant	All subjects were white, and living in the south
Dependent Variable	Prejudice against Blacks
Results	Prejudice against Blacks was greater among the lower class subjects
Conclusion	Racial prejudice serves to help one feel better about one's own low status

A related example comes from India, which for centuries had fixed social classes known as the caste system: Brahmin priest, noble, merchant, worker-peasant (and many sub-caste divisions, especially within the lowest caste). The great leader of the independence movement from Britain, Mohandas Gandhi, was also a reformer in the area of caste. Gandhi and other reformers tended to come from the Brahmin (highest) caste. Today, most Brahmins are convinced that their economic strength and educational attainments will not be threatened by abolishing caste inequities. The greatest opponents to these reforms have been members of the lower (but not lowest) groups, who do not have very much, and do not want to lose the privilege of being able to at least look down on someone else.

Discrimination refers to arbitrary behavior jeopardizing the rights of others. Discrimination often occurs in areas such as the workplace (hiring and promotion) and the real estate market. Discrimination is the behavioral component of the prejudicial attitude.

Case Study: Mr. U, 43, runs a property management firm in San Francisco. He is of Chinese descent, but his family has been in California for several generations. When he presented himself to a prospective client (the new owner of an apartment building who was looking for tenants), Mr. U displayed one of his prejudices, perhaps thinking that his client might also share it. "Don't worry, I only get tenants who are from Taiwan or Hong Kong. You have to watch out for Chinese right off the boat from the mainland. You rent to one of them and they put forty people into one apartment." His generalization about the mainland Chinese is a stereotype. If he follows through on his actions, that would be discrimination.

Mr. U's rental practices are illegal in certain localities. Also illegal are hiring practices that undeservedly discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, gender, disability, national origin, religion, or

age (over 40). Two classes not usually protected in hiring and rental discrimination are fat people and homosexuals.

Case Study: Mr. R, age 30, is a freelance technical writer. He was recruited by a head hunter who then interviewed him, and was highly impressed with his talents. Mr. R owns a home in San Francisco with a male pediatrician, with whom he has been in a long term relationship. He is not "in your face" about his homosexuality, but it is not something that he hides. When the head hunter sent Mr. R as a candidate for a technical writing job with a client company in Oakland, the firm was reluctant to call back and give a verdict. Finally, the head hunter got through and was told "He would not really fit in here." Fortunately, the head hunter found Mr. R a better position with a "gay friendly" firm in Palo Alto.

Case Study: Ms. Y, age 36, had ten years of office experience before she left work to have two children and be a stay at home Mom until they were both in school. Now Ms. Y is trying to return to the work force, six years later and forty pounds heavier. She was not given one job very comparable to the position that she had previously had with a different employer. The job was given to a slender 18 year old right out of high school. The manager doing the hiring may have discriminated based upon a stereotype such as, "Fat people are lazy" ignoring Ms. Y's energetic performance in the interview and glowing references from her former employer in another state.

The experience of Ms. Y is not unusual: among White women, being overweight is correlated with earning less money. For those who oppose size-based discrimination, these data are evidence that discrimination does exist: overweight women had a harder time to get hired or promoted to the well paying jobs. For those hiring authorities who discriminate, these data might fit the confirmation bias: *overweight women earn less because they are lazier*.

One way to answer the question about the reality of discrimination is to perform an experiment where fictitious job candidates are presented, and the variable of size (or ethnicity) is manipulated. For example, in a class of graduate students working on their M.B.A. degrees, most of the students were already managers who had some hiring authority. Subjects had to rate candidates for a position. One candidate was described on half of the questionnaires as a male weighing 165 pounds, but on the other half of the questionnaires as weighing 365 pounds. All other background statements were the same, but this candidate was judged significantly less appropriate for the job when he was described as obese.

One of the great benefits of laws against discrimination is that they can begin to change prejudices and stereotypes. At first, people may hire African Americans, women, fat people, or gays just out of fear of a discrimination suit if these "minorities" are not hired. Hopefully, the resulting experience working alongside of others in a diverse workplace will overcome the stereotypes.

Research on Size discrimination	
Researcher(s)	Brink
Subjects	MBA students
Type of research	Experiment
Independent Variable	The weight of fictitious job candidates
Factors held Constant	The real qualifications of the fictitious candidates: education and experience
Dependent Variable	The subjects' ratings of the candidates
Results	The overweight candidate received much lower ratings
Conclusion	There exists job discrimination against the obese

QUESTION #13.2: What is attribution?

Attribution is the interpretation of behavior. It is like an inference: we observe someone's behavior and try to figure out *why* he did it. Can we attribute the behavior to **internal (dispositional)** factors such as intention, effort and/or skill, or to **external (situational)** factors such as luck or task difficulty?

Case Study: T, age 12, was up on a stepladder painting the side of his house. He told his ten year old little brother to hand him up a little can of the other color paint for the trim. The younger brother put the can on the little shelf of the ladder, but it quickly fell down, spilling the paint. T started yelling at his little brother. T has made a dispositional attribution, seeing the bad result as being caused by the little brother's inattentiveness.

Several factors influence attributions. One is the subject's past knowledge of the other person's behavior. Has T's little brother a history of being clumsy? (If so, that would argue for a dispositional attribution). Another factor might be observations of other results in the same situation, even when T's little brother was not involved. Has the ladder shelf failed before? (That would argue for a situational attribution.)

Most people are tempted to engage in the **fundamental attribution error**: excusing their own bad behavior with situational attributions, yet using internal attributions to blame others for bad behavior.

Case Study: Mr. A is driving on a difficult stretch of the 10 freeway. He is late for an appointment, when all of a sudden, the car on his left cuts in front of him in order to get an approaching off ramp. Mr.

A brakes and makes a quick dispositional attribution: "That idiot, he did not even care how dangerous that was. He sure can't drive." A few miles later we find Mr. A in the left lane and he notices that his exit is fast approaching, and he cuts across two lanes of traffic (quite comparable to what the other driver had done just minutes before). Mr. A immediately comes up with a situational attribution of task difficulty: "They ought to give you more time to get over by announcing those exits in advance."

Attributions are reversed when the outcome is good, such as getting a promotion. Here, the subject is likely to use a dispositional attribution if he himself gets the promotion: "I earned it." If someone else got the promotion that he had hoped for, the subject might use a more situational attribution, "Some guys have all the luck."

Adler would explain the fundamental attributional error as just another way that we try to avoid feelings of inferiority by diverting blame to the situation when we fail, and by lowering our dispositional evaluations of others when they fail.

One bad side effect of the fundamental attributional error is that we may set up a dynamic of a vicious cycle of interpersonal interaction. Instead of giving the other person a break, by empathically trying to see it from his perspective, each side casts blame on the other.

FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTION ERROR:		
we blame others for their bad behavior, but excuse it in ourselves		
	OUTCOMES WERE	
	Good	Bad
self	INTERNAL: *Deserved* "I am smart" "I worked hard"	EXTERNAL: *not my fault* "I was unlucky" "I was tired" "It was too hard"
Other persons	EXTERNAL: *undeserved* "He was lucky" "It was too easy"	INTERNAL: *his fault* "He was lazy" "He was irresponsible" "He was stupid"

(Left vertical label: EXPLANATION FOR)

Case Study: Mr. D, age 35, is a supervisor at a manufacturing plant. His wife, Ms. D, is a stay at home mother of three. One particular week has been difficult at the plant, with Mr. D having to work late hours and weekends. When he comes home he is exhausted. He hugs his wife, but he just wants to relax in front of the TV with something to eat and drink. Instead of making a situational attribution ("He is tired from work") his wife makes a dispositional attribution ("He is cold, detached, and unappreciative of all that I do in the house"), and starts to talk, which Mr. D interprets as nagging, and he makes another dispositional attribution ("She is just a whiner, unappreciative of how hard I am working for the family") instead of a situational attribution ("She has been in the house with the kids all day long and is in need of some adult conversation").

QUESTION #13.3: What is social influence?

Human behavior is greatly influenced by the presence and behaviors of other persons.

```
   STIMULUS                  ORGANISM                  RESPONSE
================          ==============          =================
=              =          =            =          =               =
= perceived    =          =            =          =               =
= presence of  ========>= subject      ===========>= behavioral    =
= other person =          =            =          = change         =
=              =          =            =          =               =
================          ==============          =================
```

The simplest form of social influence is the **dyad, two persons interacting**. The behavior of each one serves as a stimulus for the behavior of the other. A dyad could be composed of two friends on the phone, two boxers in a bout, a customer and a retail clerk, a worker and a supervisor, a psychotherapist and patient, or in the case of Mr. and Mrs. D cited above.

Let's return to the example of the street dog chasing a jogger. We have an interactive dyad with the behavior of each changing the behavior of the other.

```
   STIMULUS                  ORGANISM                  RESPONSE
================          ==============          =================
=            =            =            =          =               =
=  running   =            =            =          =  gives chase   =
=  jogger    ========>=    dog         ===========>=               =
=            =            =            =          =               =
=            =            =            =          =               =
================          ==============          =================
```

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```
   STIMULUS                 ORGANISM                RESPONSE
===============         =============         ================
=             =         =           =         =              =
=  charging   =         =           =         = stops and    =
=  dog        =========>=  jogger    ============>= makes a      =
=             =         =           =         = throwing     =
=             =         =           =         = motion       =
===============         =============         ================


   STIMULUS                 ORGANISM                RESPONSE
===============         =============         ================
=             =         =           =         =              =
=  jogger     =         =           =         = turns and    =
=  makes a    =========>=  dog       ============>= runs away    =
=  throwing   =         =           =         =              =
=  motion     =         =           =         =              =
===============         =============         ================
```

Let's return to the example of the street beggar. There is a second
person in the dyad, the prospective donor.

```
   STIMULUS                 ORGANISM                RESPONSE
===============         =============         ================
=             =         =           =         =              =
=  passerby   =         =           =         = says "Help   =
=  approaches =========>=  beggar    ============>= a homeless   =
=             =         =           =         = Vietnam Vet" =
=             =         =           =         =              =
===============         =============         ================


   STIMULUS                 ORGANISM                RESPONSE
===============         =============         ================
=             =         =           =         =              =
=  sight of   =         =           =         = puts a few   =
=  beggar and =========>=  passerby  ============>= coins in the =
=  hearing his=         =           =         = beggar's cup =
=  words      =         =           =         =              =
===============         =============         ================


   STIMULUS                 ORGANISM                RESPONSE
===============         =============         ================
=             =         =           =         =              =
=  donation   =         =           =         = says "God    =
=  given      =========>=  beggar    ============>= bless and    =
=             =         =           =         = keep you"    =
=             =         =           =         =              =
===============         =============         ================
```

Crowds influence the behavior of individuals in special ways. A **crowd**
is simply **a large number of people assembled at a given time in the
same place**. Examples of crowds would be customers waiting to get

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through a checkout line, riders waiting at a bus stop, students waiting in line to register for courses, fans in the stands at a football game. Notice that crowds are a temporary phenomenon: once the customers get through the checkout line, or the football game is over, the members of the crowd get in their cars and go their separate ways. Although in each of these examples of crowds, the members did have a common purpose, that is not an essential feature of the crowd.

Modeling is one way that crowds influence behavior. The behavior of other members in the crowd may be taken as a norm to be imitated. Especially if someone is new to the situation (e.g., has never been in a registration line, or been to a football game) he may assume that this is just the way things are done here and go along with it.

Anonymity is a possible characteristic of crowds. You may have never seen these other people before, and may never see them again. Anonymity can also come from wearing uniforms (as in military combat) or disguises (as in Halloween or the Ku Klux Klan). Anonymity can lead to a **deindividuation** and loosen many inhibitions against violent, vandalistic, or other criminal behavior as individuals may figure that they will not be identified or held to account for their behavior. Anonymous mobs may riot or lynch.

Crowds do not have any internal organization to limit such mob behavior. The most that can be hoped for is that the people in the checkout line at the grocery store will remain neatly in line, each awaiting his turn without causing a disruptive scene, and the fans at the stadium will remain in their seats until the game is over, and then exit in an orderly fashion and go home.

Bystander apathy or involvement			
Step one	Step two	Step three	Bystander action
Does not notice victim	------------>	------------>	Does not take action
Notices victim	Does not define as emergency	------------>	Does not take action
	Defines as emergency	Does not assume responsibility	Does not take action
		Assumes some responsibility	Offers assistance

Bystander assistance is another form of behavior that is influenced by the crowd phenomenon. Many news stories have reported instances of individuals being robbed or murdered while no passersby offered any reaction or assistance to the victim. When the victim and passerby know each other, assistance is more likely to be offered. If there are no other passersby, assistance is more likely to be offered. The subject's decision to stop and help is actually a series of classifications, a cognitive map. On step one, the bigger the crowd, the less likely any individual victim would be noticed. On step two, the more unfamiliar the individual is with the situation, the less likely he would be to define it as an emergency. On step three, seeing other crowd members

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respond might convince the individual that "They already have it under control, so I do not have to get involved" but seeing no one else stop and intervene might convince the individual "If no one else is stopping, maybe I should not either; everybody else must have a good reason for not stopping."

Organizations may be an even greater influence on behavior than crowds are. **An organization is a structured, ongoing cluster of individuals sharing a similar purpose**. The workers in a place of employment would be a good example, whether they work for a private company, government agency or non-profit organization. The organization is enduring (semi-permanent) even if the individual membership changes over time. If we were to look at the workers of the XYZ company in 2000 and today, we might see many of the same old faces and a few new hires. Missing would be those workers who since 2000 have retired, resigned, died, or been laid off or fired. Consider the local high school football team in 2005 and today. Some of the players were cut from the team, others decided not to try out again, some got suspended from school, some moved out of the district, and hopefully most graduated from high school. The point is that the organization (the football team) endures even if the individuals come and go.

Unlike a crowd, the organization must have a common purpose and structured roles to meet that purpose. The fans in the stands may be a crowd, but the team on the field is an organization, sharing the common purpose of winning the game, and structuring itself into roles such as offence or defense or special teams; ball carrier or blocker or receiver, etc. When students are waiting in line to get their courses, that is a crowd, but once the students are in an ongoing class, that is an organization. Then the students share the common goals of getting through the class, learning something, and getting a good grade. The customers waiting in line at the grocery store are a crowd, but the workers at the grocery store are an organization with a common goal (making money by selling groceries), and structured roles such as butcher, checker, bagger, etc.

	Dyad	Crowd	Organization
Examples	Spouses Boxers Clerk/customer Worker/manager Patient/therapist Criminal/victim	Customers in line; fans at a stadium	Workers in a company; football team; religious congregation
Internal Structure	Usually roles	Assigned location, anonymity	Roles, Ranks
Time frame	Varies	Temporary	Enduring
Common purpose	Possible, but they may also have cross-purposes	Perhaps	Required

Organizations, as well as nations, have cultures. **Cultures are patterns of life comprised of roles and norms that are transmitted to new members**. Most of what takes place in military boot camp is not training

on how to do a future specific task in the military, but an orientation
to the roles and rules of the military culture. When a company hires a
new worker it may provide both training (how to do the task of the
specific position) and orientation (how to function in this culture).
On the national level, individuals might be enculturated to norms and
roles through the public school system, religious organizations, and
clubs such as the scouts, YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs, and 4-H.

Research on roles	
Researcher(s)	Zimbardo
Subjects	College students
Type of research	Experiment
Independent Variable	Whether the student was assigned to the role of "guard" or that of "prisoner"
Factors held Constant	All subjects had to assume a role
Dependent Variable	How the subjects behaved
Results	"Guards" became brutal; "prisoners" became withdrawn and anxious
Ethical Considerations	The welfare of the subjects was being jeopardized, so the simulation was stopped early
Conclusion	Assigned roles have an impact on behavior

The power of an organization's **roles** was demonstrated by one of
Zimbardo's experiments. He took normal college students and conducted a
prison experiment in which the volunteers were randomly assigned to the
roles of guard or prisoner. Zimbardo ended up stopping the simulation
before it was scheduled to end because some of the guards had become
too brutal, and some of the prisoners too anxious and withdrawn.
Zimbardo was called as an expert witness in the Abu Ghraib trial in
which U.S. Army prison guards were accused of brutalizing Iraqi
prisoners. Zimbardo's point is that the "rotten barrel makes the apple
rotten," so it was less the fault of the individual guards and more the
fault of the way the prison had been set up and run. The guards had
deindividuated and were being driven by group norms rather than their
individual consciences.

Norms are rules governing behavior, and include mores and folkways.
Mores are rules about what the culture considers to be **serious matters**.
Violation of mores may bring severe sanctions from the culture.
Folkways are rules about **less serious** things. Usually, matters of
taste, fashion and etiquette are mere folkways. The violation of
folkways may only call forth minor sanctions, such as disapproving
looks or gentle chiding by peers or superiors. What a culture regards
as a more or folkway may differ greatly from place to place and time to
time.

CHANGING MORES AND FOLKWAYS AFTER THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

```
          1910's  1930's  1950's  1970's  1990's

          - abortion immoral
          -
          - homosexuality immoral
          -
L         - sex in marriage only
E     M   -
V     O   - stay at home mothers
E     R   -
L     E   - stay in a bad marriage
      S   -
O         - women wear dresses
F         -
          -                        homosexuality as preference
S         -
E         -                        abortion a matter of choice
R     F   -
I     O   -                        more unmarried cohabitation
O     L   -
U     K   -                        most mothers work
S     W   -
N     A   -              get out of a bad marriage
E     Y   -
S     S   -              women may wear pants
S         -
          - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

          1910's  1930's  1950's  1970's  1990's
```

In the U.S. norms for appropriate sexual behavior have changed over the
last hundred years. Before World War I, there were strict ideals.
Abortion and homosexuality were seen as clearly immoral. Sex was
supposed to be in marriage only. Women who had children were supposed
to stay at home and be homemakers rather than seek outside employment.
If they were in a bad marriage, that is where they should stay (for the
welfare of the children). Women were supposed to dress appropriately
(long dresses). By World War II, some of those mores had relaxed into
folkways. As women went to work in the defense plants, they began
wearing pants. As many wartime romances broke up, the divorce rate
climbed. By the end of the century, most mothers were working outside
of the home; many couples were cohabitating prior to (or instead of)
marriage. Things may had been illegal in most states at the beginning
of the century (abortion and homosexuality) were now protected
behaviors in many jurisdictions.

The above example of sexual mores becoming folkways shows how norms can
go in one direction, but they can also go in the other. Some activities
that were mere folkways fifty years ago have become mores. In the 1950s
if you were riding a bus, smoking was governed by good manners (which
usually meant offering the stranger next to you a cigarette before you
lit up). Now, not smoking in public places has become a more, backed up
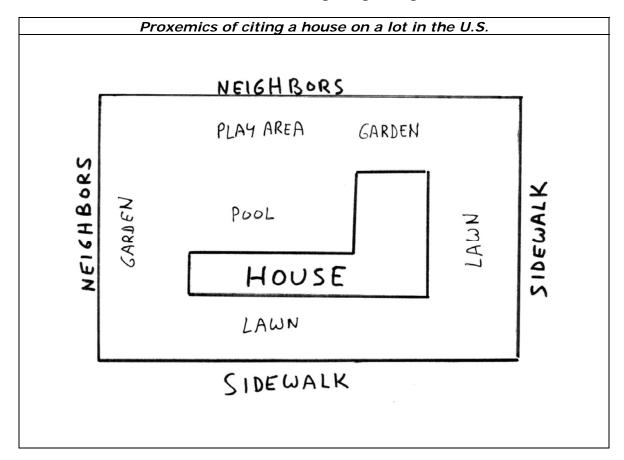by legal sanctions.

It is important to mention that we are talking here about mores and
folkways, not about morality. Just because a society has no sanctions
against a behavior does not mean that it is moral. Individuals must
still decide on their own if they should engage in those actions. The
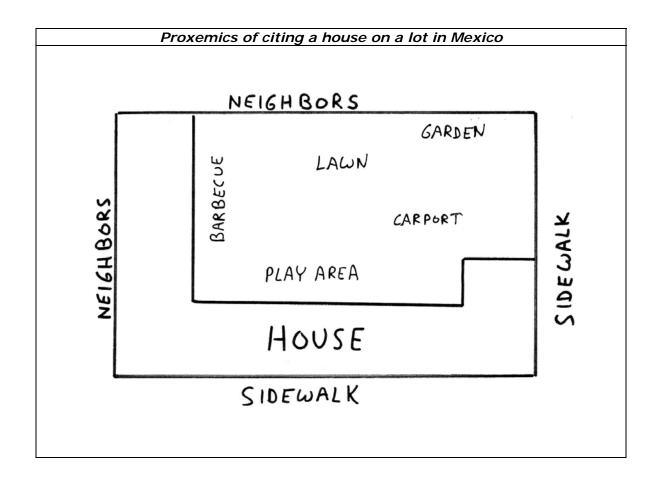eating of meat is not prohibited anywhere in the U.S., but millions of

vegetarians have decided on their own that it is not moral to kill
animals in order to eat them. Some form of gambling is now legal in
most states, but millions of individuals have decided that it is not
moral to participate in gaming or wagering.

One example of a norm is **proxemics, the study of the rules for the use
of interpersonal space**. When the professor is standing in front of the
classroom, and most students are more than a dozen feet away, that is a
distance for public events, but not personal conversations.

```
              i :       s       :       p
              n :       o       :       u
    \o/       t :       c       :       b
     |        i :       i       :       l
    / \       m :       a       :       i
              a :       l       :       c
              t :               :
              e :               :
```

After class if you have a question for the professor, you might catch
him outside of the classroom. You would probably stand about two to
four feet away during this personal conversation. If you got within a
foot of him, he might back up a little, because you are getting into
intimate space. Normally, we reserve intimate space for those
individuals that we feel comfortable giving a hug to.

Proxemics of citing a house on a lot in the U.S.

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Proxemics of citing a house on a lot in Mexico

NEIGHBORS

GARDEN

LAWN

BARBECUE

NEIGHBORS

CARPORT

SIDEWALK

PLAY AREA

HOUSE

SIDEWALK

Rules for placing a home upon a lot are also governed by the norms of proxemics. In the U.S., especially California suburbs, the house is set back from the sidewalks and neighbors. This may be a mere custom (folkway) whose violations will only receive disapproving glances of passersby, or it might be a more in certain communities enforced by zoning and building permits.

Related to proxemics are the rules for interpersonal touching. In most dyads, the handshake is the appropriate form of touching between new acquaintances, and it must be the right hand, a certain length of time, and a certain strength of grip. Other forms of touching that might be acceptable on a football field, would be considered sexual harassment or battery in the workplace.

One example of a powerful source of normative referencing in the U.S. would be socio-economic class. All societies, human and animal, tend to segment and differentiate by function and by gradations of status and power. In modern free market economies, **social class is determined by perceptions of wealth, education, and occupational prestige**. Although American social class is not fixed like the castes of ancient India, about eighty percent of Americans end up in the social class of their parents. Most of the children of upper middle class parents go to college, while most of the children of the poor are lucky to finish

high school. About ten percent of Americans (and many immigrants) move up from the class of their parents, and some move down.

Socio-economic classes in America			
SOCIAL CLASS	**EDUCATION**	**HOME**	**OCCUPATION**
High, elite	Post-graduate	Mansion	Investors, Executives
Upper middle	Post-graduate	Exclusive suburb	Managers, Professionals
Middle	Bachelors or some college	Suburb or city condo	White collar
Working, Lower middle	High school or some college	Old neighborhood, Apartments or Trailers	Blue collar
Low, poor, Marginalized, Underclass	Drop out	Housing projects	Unemployed, Unskilled, or Migrant

Social class dictates norms for behavior, including what clothes are appropriate, and whether it is acceptable to park a vehicle on the front lawn. The individual's very perception of the milestones in the life cycle may be determined by social class, with the higher classes having higher age norms for certain transitions. Bernice Neugarten asked a series of questions about age norms to steelworkers on Chicago's South Side, and then asked the same questions to upper middle class professionals in the suburb of Skokie.

Research on social class and the life cycle	
Researcher(s)	Neugarten
Subjects	Chicago area residents
Type of research	Survey
Independent Variable	Socio-economic class
Factors held Constant	Geographical location (Chicago metro area)
Dependent Variable	Perceived points in the life cycle
Results	Those with higher socio-economic status perceived later age points
Conclusion	Socio-economic class influences perception of the life cycle

Brink followed up the study in the 1970s in rural Mexico. He found an even more constricted life span, with adult responsibilities beginning in the teens and old age beginning about fifty.

Perceptions of the life cycle according to social class differences			
Question	Working class	Middle class	Rural Mexico
When should a boy shoulder a man's responsibilities?	18	24	16
What is the best time for a girl to get married?	20	25	16
When is a man an old man?	65	70	50

When rural Mexicans migrate to cities like Toluca and get a job in the Chrysler plant making the PT Cruiser, their perception of the life cycle changes. Now, they expect to keep on working hard until age 65, and hope that their children will finish high school, and that their daughters will not marry as young as their mothers did. In a generation or two when some of their children succeed in rising to the middle class by virtue of starting a successful business or getting into one of the professions, the age norms will shift again, approximating those of the American middle class, helping their children through the university, and continuing on later on in their own careers.

High social class has a moderate correlation with successful aging. Middle and upper middle class aged tend to be healthier and more active than working class and lower class counterparts of the same age. Go to a senior center in a working class or lower class area and see a lot of people sitting around: "We worked hard all of our lives, and now we have earned the right to rest and relax." Go to a senior center in an upper middle class area and see people learning new languages, engaged in volunteer service, dancing, and planning their next cruise: "We worked hard and invested our money while we were young so that we would have the ability to be active at this time of our lives."

Case Study: Mr. G, now age 74, had been a high school principal in a factory town in the Midwest. Most of the men in town tried to retire at age 62. Mr. G retired at 67. Many of the men from his town have escaped the cold winters by retiring to a part of Florida, where they could fish all year round. Mr. G retired to a suburb of Guadalajara. (He is not alone, for there are over a hundred thousand retired Americans in the greater Guadalajara area.) Although he does enjoy fishing and lives close to Lake Chapala, Mr. G gets to fish only a couple of days a month. Most of the time he is too busy as a volunteer administrator with the local American Legion Hall or working with several Mexican charities. One of his new interests is Charreria, traditional Mexican horsemanship and costuming. Every few months, he and his wife travel around Mexico to some part they have not seen. Every year, they try to travel to some other country they have not seen.

One problem with social class is that it is a source of stereotypes, scapegoating, prejudice and discrimination. Middle class people often define themselves by who they are not (lower class). Subscribing to the **just world** hypothesis, middle (and upper) class individuals tend to use

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dispositional attribution to explain the relative success of the
different classes: "I live so well because I earned it; those lower
class people have such a hard life because they have been so lazy and
irresponsible."

Social class norms also influence choice of spouse. Parents are
delighted if their children (especially their daughters) can marry up
into the next class, and horrified that a daughter may throw away the
benefits of her class by marrying down. This gender differential can be
explained by the fact that it is the man who is the traditional
breadwinner, and whose occupation would determine the status of the
entire nuclear family created by the marriage.

Case Study: Mr. B grew up in a middle class family. He did well in
college and went on for an M.B.A. degree and seemed poised for a career
in business that would put him into the upper middle class at least.
His family was pleased when he announced that he was going to marry an
immigrant woman with little formal education who had worked as a maid.
They thought that she would be a good homemaker and helpmate who would
not take the spotlight off of their son with a competing career. On the
other hand, when Mr. B's own parents married a generation earlier, his
maternal grandparents were very disappointed when their only daughter
was going to lower herself by marrying a factory worker.

**Alienation is the feeling that one is cut-off from one's normative
culture**. Alienation is an uncomfortable emotion. Alienation has become
more widespread in the U.S. over the past five decades. Many people
respond to alienation by seeking a new, rigid culture with clear mores
for reference norms. Street gangs are organizations with clear goals
(even if the goals are rejected by the larger, national culture),
definite roles, and harsh sanctions for the violation of mores. Notice
that such gangs are most popular among those who are most marginalized
and alienated from the larger national culture (poor, urban youth).


```
   STIMULUS                ORGANISM                RESPONSE
================        =============        =================
= lack of      =        =           =        = alienation   =
= contact with =        = disad-    =        = followed by  =
= norms of     ========>= vantaged  ============>= gang       =
= main culture =        = youth     =        = activity     =
=              =        =           =        =              =
================        =============        =================
```


Affiliation means seeking the presence of other people. When people
become confused or frightened, their need to affiliate increases. In
one experiment, psychology students were told to report in the
afternoon to participate in an experiment. They were randomly assigned
to see a presentation describing the experiment in one of two rooms. In
one room the students were shown a small device that would fit around a
finger and told "This will give a mild electric shock, a tingle that
most of you will not be able to feel. This is an experiment in your
sensitivity to that tingle. As soon as you detect the tingle, press the

button, and the electricity ceases." The other room saw a large device
that sent crackling sparks across the room and were told that it was an
experiment to measure pain threshold. All students were told to wait in
the hall and they would be called in one at a time to be shocked.
Actually, no students received either kind of shock. The purpose of
this experiment was to see how the students would react to the prospect
of receiving a shock. Students from the first group tended to sit down
and read while they waited, or conversed in pairs. Students from the
second group tended to stand and talk in larger numbers, "Do we have to
do this for the class? Are you going in there? Do you think we should
just go back to the dorm?"

```
   STIMULUS                 ORGANISM                 RESPONSE
================         ==============         =================
= frightening  =         =            =         =               =
= apparatus    =         =            =         =               =
= for giving   ========>= students    ===========>= affiliated    =
= electric     =         =            =         =               =
= shocks       =         =            =         =               =
================         ==============         =================
```

Attraction is different from affiliation. **Attraction is being drawn to
specific others**. Attraction might be the first step to relationships
involving love and/or respect. Factors that can influence attraction
might be physical appearance or common values. Factors that might lead
to a longer relationship might be intimacy, passion, and commitment.

Equity theory holds that most people will pair up with someone who is at
a comparable level of attractiveness. When a person settles for someone
who is at a lower level of physical attractiveness, the more attractive
partner usually expects some form of compensation in return. When we
see couples of similar levels of attractiveness, we regard that as the
normal state of affairs. When we see couples of differing levels of
attractiveness, we make inferences about what the compensation might
be.

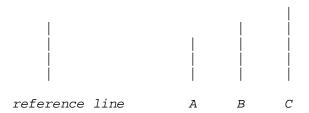| OBSERVATION	INFERENCE
Handsome man with a homely woman.	"He must walk all over her."
Beautiful woman with an old, short, fat, bald man.	"He must be rich."

Women and men may have different priorities when it comes to looking
for an ideal partner. One social psychologist, Goode, ran different
fictitious personal advertisements. More men responded to an
advertisement about a beautiful waitress than responded to an ad about
an average looking female lawyer. More women responded to an ad about
an average looking male lawyer than responded to an ad about a handsome
cabdriver.

Research on attraction

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Researcher(s)	Goode
Subjects	Men and women who responded to personal ads
Type of research	Experiment
Independent Variable	How a fictitious person was described: average or good looks; average job or lawyer
Dependent Variable	How many responses each advertisement received
Results	Most males responded to an attractive woman; most females responded to a high status job
Ethical Considerations	The subjects were tricked into thinking that a real person was available and potentially interested in them
Conclusion	Men care about physical attractiveness while women care more about socio-economic factors

There are many factors other than initial physical attraction to
explain the success of long term dyads. Similarities of values are
probably more important than other types of similarities (e.g., age,
intelligence, education). Complimentary differences also have a role
(e.g., a dominant choleric might team up with a submissive phlegmatic).
A good analogy might be a successful football team. You cannot build
such a team by taking the best quarterback and cloning him. Having
eleven of him on the field is not going to win many games. A good team
needs someone to pass the ball, but also someone to catch it, someone
to rush, to kick, to punt, and to block. A diversity of skills all
working toward the same goal makes for an effective team.

Conformity means that individuals bring their behavior or thoughts into
line with social norms. The higher an individual's anonymity, self
esteem or status within a group, the less he will tend to conform. The
larger the group, the greater the conformity. The more unanimous the
group, the greater the conformity. Solomon **Asch** studied high school
males who wanted to apply to a service academy so that they could
become military aviators. They were told to show up for a group
interview. After about twenty minutes of questions such as "why do you
want a career in the military," the subjects were told that pilots
needed to have good vision, so part of the interview would be a test
for vision. On one side of the room was a large card with a ten inch
reference line on it. On the other side of the room was a card with
three lines, one of which was the same length as the reference line.

```
                                     |
         |                    |       |
         |                    |   |   |
         |                    |   |   |
         |                    |   |   |

    reference line           A   B   C
```

The interviewer then went around the room asking each interviewee to announce which line on the right was closest in length to the reference line on the left. The first few "interviewees" who responded were actually confederates of the interviewer, and they had been instructed to give the wrong answer A, instead of the right answer B. The last person to give his answer was the real subject of this experiment. Many of these subjects agreed with the group and conformed to the wrong answer.

Depending upon different factors, between a third and four-fifths of the subjects agreed with the wrong answer given by the rest of the panel. By manipulating a variety of independent variables, Asch found that if just one other interviewee came out with the right answer, then the subject was likely to give the right answer. Also, if the other interviewees were perceived as having lower status than the subjects (e.g., they are going to West Point to be infantry officers) the subjects were likely to give the right answer (perhaps the subjects then thought "We pilots have better vision.")

```
   STIMULUS                  ORGANISM                  RESPONSE
===============         =============         ================
= other people =         =             =         =               =
= give the     =         =             =         = conforms,    =
= wrong answer =========>= student    ============>= giving wrong =
= about the    =         =             =         = answer also  =
= line length  =         =             =         =               =
===============         =============         ================
```

Research on conformity	
Researcher(s)	Asch
Subjects	High school males being interviewed
Type of research	Experiment
Independent Variable	What the other "interviewees" announced was the right answer
Factors held Constant	Age, gender, situation
Dependent Variable	Whether the subjects would give the right answer
Results	Many subjects gave the wrong answer given by the other "interviewees"
Ethical Considerations	Subjects were deceived and felt foolish afterwards
Conclusion	Most people conform under social pressure

Obedience is complying with the demands of an authority figure.
Milgram studied obedience by getting students to volunteer for what they thought was an experiment on the role of punishment in learning. The students were taken to a special lab and introduced to a researcher

(wearing a white coat who would conduct the project) and to a man who would function in the role of learner in the next room. The subject was told that he would instruct the learner on how to do a task by using an intercom, and the learner in the next room had to complete the task correctly, and if he did not, the subject was to administer progressively stronger electric shocks as punishment.

Things went along well for a while with the "learner" apparently performing well and no shock was required. Then the progress stopped and the subject was told to administer the first, mild shock. After several of these learning failures calling for shocks, the "learner" in the other room started to object to the pain. At higher voltages, he screamed, then pounded on the wall, then was silent. In reality, the person in the other room at the other end of the intercom was not performing any tasks or getting any shocks. He was just an actor who pretended to be getting shocked. The subject of this research was the student who had been assigned the instructor role and to administer the shocks.

```
   STIMULUS                   ORGANISM                    RESPONSE
================           =============           =================
= authority in =          =           =           =               =
= white coat   =          = volunteer =           =  obeys the    =
= reminds him  =========>= in the     ============>=  authority    =
= that he agreed          ="instructor"=          =  and gives     =
= to participate          = role      =           =  the shock     =
================           =============           =================
```

| Milgram's research on obedience ||||
Volts	Label	What "learner" does	Subjects who obeyed
30	Slight	Silence	100%
90	Moderate	Grunt	100%
150	Strong	"Stop, I can't go on"	100%
210	Very strong	"Stop, I can't go on"	100%
270	Intense	Screams, pounds on wall	100%
330	Extreme	Silence	72%
390	Dangerous	Silence	65%
450	XXX	Silence	65%

Research on	
Researcher(s)	Milgram
Subjects	College students
Type of research	Experiment
Independent Variable	Presence of the investigator reminding the subject that he had agreed to fulfill a role
Factors held Constant	All subjects were in the role of "teacher" who administered shocks
Dependent Variable	Whether or not the subject obeyed the authority and administered the shocks

Results	Most subjects obeyed and administered shocks labeled as dangerous
Ethical Considerations	Subjects were deceived and felt badly afterward for having obeyed so blindly
Conclusion	People readily obey authority figures

Follow up experiments found that the subject's obedience was more likely if the authority figure was seen as affiliated with a prestigious institution, and was physically close to the subject. Disobedience tends to increase with the greater proximity of the "victim" or other models of disobedience.

Cult is a somewhat derogatory term for a **new religious movement**, especially one with unusual theological doctrine or one that is abusive of its membership. Cult leaders tend to be charismatic individuals whom the followers find attractive and whom they must obey without question. Individuals with high alienation from the larger culture, and with low self esteem, are more likely to join cults. New members tend to affiliate, conform and obey very strongly, dogmatically accepting new doctrines. Robert **Adorno**'s typology may be useful in understanding those individuals most likely to be attracted to cults: authoritarians rather than egalitarians.

Many cults are apocalyptic, preaching an end of the world scenario. Many cult members may experience a cognitive dissonance if a predicted end of the world does not occur on schedule, and because they have so committed themselves to the cult by their previous behavior, they may readily accept a trumped up explanation and continue on in their membership. "God saw their faith and decided to be merciful for now."

However, which religious organizations are considered cults by outsiders often tells us more about the stereotypes and prejudices of the outsiders rather than the practices of the religious movements.