Attitudes and Social Change
Prejudice, protest, political attitudes …

Next week: Effects of attitudes
on information processing

Today
- Discussion of book (ch. 6-7)
- Review of last week
- Social change – some big picture stuff
  - Individual versus social attitudes
  - Generation Millennial?
  - Social pressure for the status quo:
    - Descriptive norms
    - Balance theory
    - Ideologies
Last week: Persuasion

- Information processing
  - Understand, process and remember msg -> P
- The Yale group
  - Attention, comprehension, rehearsal, yielding
- The ELM and HSM
  - Ability and motivation -> degree of effort
  - Variables can serve as cue -> low effort proc, argument in high effort proc, trigger for high effort, or bias direction of effortful proc
- The group approach
  - It's all about group identities and norms
  - Identity relevance is what motivates high effort processing
  - Outsider messages are ignored or discounted
  - Insider messages have to be prototypical
  - Going against this → failed P

Attitudes – Individual, Social and Societal
“Personal” preferences?

- Hair style, colours, clothing styles, shoes, ETC!
- Car styles, colours, speeds, sizes, ETC!
- Food styles, portion sizes, sugar/spice, ETC!
- Pet/animal ownership, preferences, illness/mortality, ETC!
- Time and energy devoted to parents vs friends vs partner vs children, ETC!
- Charitable giving, volunteer work, tithing, ETC!
A range of options...

- Social factors determine range of “thinkable” “appropriate” “normal”
- Tell us what is good and bad
- Define ‘meanings’
  - Black : Non-conformity, funerals, fashion
  - Tans : Working class, leisured class, bushies
- What to work for & on
- What to rebel against
- What to ignore

Generation Theory

- Whatever era we’re living in, tend to think future will be straight line extension of present – but that is never true
- Howe & Strauss theorize that there is a pattern to generations – in the case of Millennial Generation:
  - Breaks from the young-adult generation (Gen X)
  - Corrects what it perceives as excesses of the current midlife generation (Boomer parents and leaders)
  - Fills social role by departing elder generation (WW II GI – Great Generation)

Slides S7-14 from neat presentation online at http://www.tap.msu.edu/PPT/2005/TA_Understanding_Millennial_Generation.ppt
[American?] Behavior and Attitudes

- Unlike any other youths in living memory
- Births to teens continue to decline – 28% decline since 1990, among younger teens, 38% decline – abortion rate also down among this age group (NCES, 2003)
- Political awareness higher than in a decade; drinking and smoking lowest levels in several decades (CIRP, 2003)
- Developing a meaningful philosophy of life has declined as a life goal (CIRP, 2003)
From Baby Boomer to Gen Xer to Millennial Teen

Behavior and Attitudes

- Illicit drug use among teens peaked in 1996 or 1997 (depending upon grade level), now in decline among 7th-12th graders at each grade level; including prevalence of alcohol use and occasions of heavy drinking (UM ISR, 2003)
- Violence and other crimes committed by youth peaked in 1993, dramatic decline ever since -- as much as 78% decline in some states [even with Columbine and copy crimes – fewer in # than media represented]
- In 1970 – ratio of adult to youth crime was less than 2; now it is greater than 3
Millennials

- Characteristics?
  - Special
  - Confident
  - Achieving
  - Sheltered
  - Team-oriented
  - Pressured
  - Conventional

- There’s a lot to Like About This Group
  - Institution Builders
  - Technology Adherents
Web skills

- Millennials queried in the survey [Microsoft] reported using a wide variety of technology tools and services every day, including mobile phones (89 percent), smartphones or PDAs (20 percent), MP3 players (71 percent), text messaging (83 percent), and instant messaging (75 percent). The Web also featured prominently in their responses, as Millennials frequent social networking sites (87 percent), conduct Web-based search (92 percent), access Web-based e-mail (88 percent), conduct research using online Wikis (59 percent), and post to personal blogs (28 percent) or their own Web sites (26 percent).

But What’s Frustrating About Teaching Them?

- They Don’t Read as Much (Books)
  - NYT Fall 2002 – Books overtaken by web
- Declining Math/Science Focus
- Visually oriented differently than prior generations (Is this the MTV Generation?)
- Student “consumers” more grade oriented (?) – Resulting behavior?
Some Australian stats

- In 2002, 28% of people aged 18–24 years had undertaken voluntary work in the previous 12 months (mostly through a sports, rec & hobby group [40%]),
  - Age 35-44 (42%) = peak of volunteering.

- In 2002, 95% of the 1.9 million people aged 18–24 years lived with others, while 5% lived alone, a lower proportion than at older ages.

- 10% of women aged 18–24 years felt unsafe or very unsafe home alone after dark, higher than for any other age group of either sex. In contrast, around 2% of young men of this age felt unsafe or very unsafe at home after dark.

- This was despite the fact that young men were the most likely of any age group of either sex to have experienced actual or threatened violence (21%). Young women were less likely than young men to have experienced actual or threatened violence (10%).

PEOPLE AGED 18–24 YEARS: PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES(a) — 2002

- Went out to a restaurant, café or bar
- Attended movies, theatre or concert
- Spent physical activity (ex)
- Visited parks, zoos or theme park
- Visited library, museum or art gallery
- Church or religious activities
- Recreational or cultural group activities
- Community or special interest group activities

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES BY WHETHER YEAR 12 STUDENTS HAD DONE OR WOULD DO THEM — 2004

- Signed a petition
- Collected signatures on a petition
- Took part in a rally or demonstration
- Written a letter to a politician
- Written a letter to Prime Minister
- Written contact to media
- Occupied buildings as a protest
- Used violence like throwing stones/paint
- Wrote or sent an e-mail to a politician

Source: ABS 2012 General Social Survey.

http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/7d12b0f6763c78caaa257061001cc588/27fcco21396e693502ca29f1b000103310106open&document
Is there a “your generation”?

- Do you relate to the American description of ‘Millenials’?
- Compared to your parents and grandparents, what are your:
  - Values?
  - Skills?
  - Toys & hobbies?
  - Hopes/Plans for the future?
- How different is this from young people not at uni?

Social and societal attitudes

- **Operant conditioning** – approval feels good
- Observational learning – categorise objects and see costs/benefits through sig others
- Approval is heuristic that identifies the appropriate attitude to achieve goals
- What people do is **heuristic** for attitudes and action
- Salient group identities and norms shape attitudes
- Rejection of outgroups / “Not Mes” shapes attitudes (Polarisation / Reactance)
- “Relevance” (socially learned) activates attitudes
- “Credibility” (socially learned) has a big impact on attitude formation / persuasion / learning
- Social groups ‘set the agenda’ for your self-definition, skills, life goals, and relationships
A few cool persuasion & norm research areas that impact on societies

- Descriptive norms – silent power
- The Cialdini framework – 6 paths to influence
- Balance theory
- Ideologies – what are they?

The descriptive norm – invisible influence?

- Alluded to distinction between injunctive and descriptive norm in TPB research
  - Originally SN = “what SOs expect & want”
  - Find what SOs do themselves also predicts
- People are rarely conscious of own and others’ conformity to descriptive norms
  - “Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist” – JM Keynes
  - First & second piece of litter studies
- Donaldson et al 94, 95: Why anti-drug skills campaigns of 80s (‘how to say no’) sometimes -> backlash
  - “resistance” training ineffective with those who don’t have negative attitudes
  - Inflates perception of behavioural descriptive norms

**Reciprocation:** Mailing $5 gift chq with survey 2x > response than $50 paymt for completed survey (James & Bolstein 92)

**Consistency:** agrt to receive cookie sellers 18% vs 32% preceded by “How are you?” (89% bought) (Howard 90)

**Social proof:** People laugh > w. laugh track and rate funnier (Smyth & Fuller 72)

**Liking:** Consumers more likely to buy insurance when salesperson || on age, religion, politics, & smoking (Evans, 63)

**Authority:** 12 articles by prestigious authors, unis resubmitted to same journal; 9 revwd; 8 rejctd (Peters & Ceci 82)

**Scarcity:** phosphate ban led to pns gentler, > effective, powerful, even poured easier (Mavis, 1975; M et al 73)

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**Bringing things into balance**

- **Belief in a Just World (Lerner, 1981)**
  - Victim blaming
  - What is, is right ; love of success

- **Preserving sense of control and meaning**
  - System-justification (e.g., Jost)
  - Why poor people can be more conservative

- **Consistency motivations**
  - Dissonance
  - Balance theory
Balance theory (Heider)

- Motive for consistency among evaluation of attitude objects (specific focus on people, actions, issues …)
  - harmony in our views and behaviors
  - we want to agree with people we like and disagree with those we don’t

Think of someone you respect / like. What if they expressed an opinion you opposed?
1. Could change your feelings for the person
2. Could change your opinion on the issue

National Rifle Association t-shirt

* Would you like this stranger?
* What if your close friend wore this t-shirt?
* What if a “Family First” politician wore the t-shirt?
Balance Theory
Balanced Situations

- Michelle + Classmate
  + Legalized gay marriage
- Michelle - Classmate
  - Legalized gay marriage

Balance Theory
Imbalanced Situations

- Michelle + Classmate
  + Legalized gay marriage
- Michelle - Classmate
  - Legalized gay marriage

- Michelle - Classmate
  - Legalized gay marriage
- Michelle + Classmate
  + Legalized gay marriage
Why do inequalities persist?

- People want to believe in a just world [dissonance, individual & group differences]
  - Leads to victim-blaming and + to successful people
- People want to preserve a sense of control and meaning [dissonance, individual & group differences]
  - Leads to denial of inequality and situational factors
- People generally are socialised to like & respect authority; [Balance theory, heuristics]
  - Leads to difficulty accepting critical political or social viewpoints
- People generally want to like what their SOs like; [Balance theory, heuristics]
  - Leads to difficulty accepting new viewpoints
- What is (status quo) is a descriptive norm
  - Creates conformity – often not consciously
- Radicals by definition are unusual & freakish
  - Easy -> dismiss based on heuristics of similarity, etc.
  - Hard for them to motivate others to process arguments

Ideologies – what are they?

- Patsy likes:
  - Work for the dole
  - Sale of Telstra
  - Howard’s IR laws
- She dislikes:
  - Multiculturalism
  - “Black armband history”
  - Cappucino courses

- Eve likes:
  - Reconciliation
  - Multiculturalism
  - Fine Arts
- She dislikes:
  - Globalisation
  - Big business
  - Erosion of social services

Who likes uranium mining?
Australia’s participation in the war in Iraq?
Mandatory emissions caps?
Ideologies as networks I

Issues are linked to each other because:
* same dimensions and values may be used to evaluate each (e.g., jobs, justice, equality, etc.)
* Can build consistent ideology by systematically deliberating
* But social and political issues are extremely complex and difficult to resolve (real trade-offs)
* People learn what's important from groups & SOs

Ideologies as networks II

Issues are linked to each other because:
* The issues are linked to group identities and norms
* If you know who you are you know what to think
* If you know who you aren't, you know as well (heuristics)
Ideologies: The point

- By definition start with little awareness of issues
- Initial attitudes depend heavily on ‘framing’ (how object is categorised, e.g. by media, parents)
  - Most people get politics from parents & media
  - Over teens and 20s peers increasingly imp
- Development of political awareness depends on who you are – determines info attend to & trust
- If adopt party affiliation, often take on issues heuristically
- But with ability AND motivation people can seek out info and systematically evaluate across key dimensions of subjective value / probability

Ideologies: The point II

- Few do. And can’t be ‘objective’ in context where source of info and IP itself liable to biases, omissions; selection of dimensions on which to evaluate = contested.
- Heavy bias -> status quo introduced by, e.g.
  1. learned apathy vs efficacy ['neoliberal fatalism']
  2. motives for denial, control and justification
  3. descriptive norms
  4. Balance / consistency motives
- It’s a miracle things change!

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does”
- Margaret Mead
Successful social change movements of the 20\textsuperscript{th} c

- Increased equality for women
  - Voting, financial support for mums & divorced, increased support for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, lower sexual double standard, access to education (incl. unis), access to jobs
- Increased equality for Indigenous Australians
- Increased equality for gay & lesbian Australians
- Safety net for the poor:
  - The dole, medicare, the age pension
- Better conditions for workers
  - 40-hour week, weekend, overtime; sick pay; holiday pay
- Massive reduction in drink driving rates
- Massive reduction in smoking rates
- Increased environmental awareness: water & energy conservation, recycling
  - in context of massive, continuing increase in unsustainable wastage & consumerism

How did it happen?

- As a general rule:
  - A small group of radicals raised the issue (salience);
  - A wider social movement -> protest, activism (if the issue evoked identities and consequences);
  - A large minority of society came on board (became convinced of identities and/or consequences at stake);
  - a political party adopted or coopted the issue;
  - laws were changed;
- 'stateways became folkways' – if :
  - The consequences are (seen to be) important, probable
  - The values are core to multiple groups
  - The other parties / groups swing behind the leader
  - A big descriptive norm change occurs
  - Usually also identity dynamics -> resistance and polarisation – but time tells who wins out
Attitudes and social change

- Why many of our individual attitudes are the same
  - Generation theory and millennials
  - Other models of social influence we've learned (e.g., Operant conditioning; descriptive and injunctive norms as heuristics; referent informational influence; social proof; liking; authority; scarcity)
  - Cialdini's 6 principles of influence (reciprocation; consistency; social proof; liking; authority; scarcity)

- How and why our individual attitudes become ordered
  - Motives for liking the status quo
  - Consistency motives — dissonance & balance theory
  - Ideologies as networks
    - Linked to dimensions of evaluation
    - Linked to group identities and norms (generate 'frames')

- How change happens
  - From individual activists to political parties and laws to norms and 'individual' attitudes

Next week: How attitudes influence information processing
- Reading: Ch. 9

In the tutes this week:
- Optional consult on the results section (Assignment 2)