

Lecture 14 – Relationships and Social Exchange

The Abstract: In the last lecture, we looked at broad forces shaping the relationship between men and women. Today we look at the forces that shape individual relationships. What makes two people form a relationship? What keeps that relationship intact? Of course, there are many factors. We will look at some quasi-economic factors in the context of Social Exchange theory. The core of the theory is that people want to maximize their "profits" while, at the same time, they want their relationships to be fair and reciprocal.

Your goal should be to understand how the various experiments described today support (or do not support) the theory.

TWO NOTES ABOUT PAPER THREE:

Note One: For paper three, you do NOT need to work from material on the website. Indeed, you will find that material to be absent. You need to find an interesting topic. You need to decide how it could fit into Gleitman. You need to write the new bit of Gleitman.

Note Two: If you are revising a bit of Gleitman (e.g. adding some cool new references to a section), please be sure that your paper is not made up of large pieces of lightly rewritten Gleitman prose. You need to write your own stuff.

Lecture Notes:

Psychopathological Theory of Love (well, not really a theory)

Back to Shakespeare

"Lovers and madmen have such seething brains
such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
more than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact."

MSND 5:1:4-8

And a bit more Shakespeare

Love is merely a madness and I tell you deserves a dark house and a whip
as madmen do; and the reason they are not so punished and cured is that the
lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too.
(As You Like It, 3, 2, 391-395)

Chemical Theory of Attraction (well, sort of chemical)

The Proximity Effect or "You may have already met your life's partner"

Attribution of arousal

Romeo and Juliet

Misattribution of arousal

The shaky bridge experiment

Dutton, D. G., & Aron, A. P. (1974). Some evidence for heightened sexual attraction on conditions of high anxiety. *J. Personality and Social Psychology*, 36, 521-529

What is the paradigm?

What is the role of the shaky bridge?

Social Exchange and the Economics of Relationships

Why does person A form a relationship with person B out of the set of all people?

Evolutionary fitness?

Why do some relationships never happen? (or what I did in High School).

Why didn't my relationship happen?

A different scenario

Why is there a problem in this case?

Can we identify an underlying principle here?

Well, yes, that is why I am asking. The principle is

The Rule of Reciprocity

Reciprocity implies some form of economic valuation on our acts and attributes.

Why?

The analysis of the economics of social interaction is called Social Exchange Theory - Blau (1964)

There are rewards:

tangible
intangible
internal

There are costs
tangible
intangible
internal

Profits are defined as Rewards – Costs

How precise are these calculations?

Three tenets of social exchange theory

- 1) people want to maximize profits
- 2) Profits for A = Profits for B (approx)
- 3) A relationship must be better than perceived alternatives in order to survive.

Do people do this sort of math in the context of romantic relations?

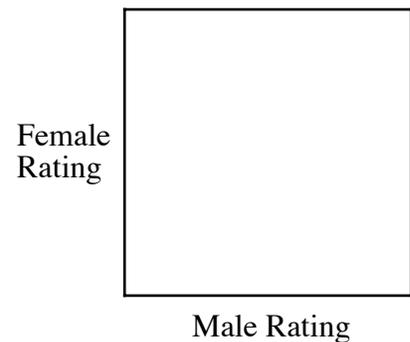
Hatfield et al (1966) - The Big Computer Match Dance

What is the design of the experiment?

What is the predicted result?

What is the actual result?

What was the fatal flaw in this experiment?



Kiesler and Baral (1970) - Let's try again

What is the design of the experiment?

What is the predicted result?

What is the actual result?

	Good	Not so good
Good		
Female Looks		
Not so good		
	Male Feels	

A real-world study (also Hatfield, I think)

What is the design of the experiment?

What is the predicted result?

What is the actual result?

What is the cliché?

What is the other cliché?

How does that work in social exchange?

Female Rating	
	Male Rating

The social exchange "problem set"

Why don't people simple leave bad relationships?

Who has power in a relationship?

Who works hardest at the relationship?

	below avg	HE	above avg
below avg			
SHE			
above avg			

Are relationships really this mercantile and crass?

Differences between economics and social exchange

- 1) Economic costs and benefits are more precise and calculable than social
- 2) The nature of negotiation is different.

What about highly unequal exchanges? Benefits that cannot be reciprocated

Social exchange theory poses the problem but does not specify the solution

Roger Brown (Social Psych: The Second Edition) and "central exchange".

The rigged telephone booth experiment

What is the design?

What is the result?

	Coin	No Coin
Help		
No Help		

How long does the effect last? The note paper experiment