

Prosocial Behavior

Altruism and Helping Behavior

- What do we mean by prosocial behavior?
 - ▣ Definitions

Prosocial: the label for a broad category of actions that are “defined by society as generally beneficial to other people and to the ongoing political system”.

Prosocial behavior is defined as doing something that is good for other people or for society as a whole.

Edward Snowden has been defined in the US as a traitor; many people however believe that as a whistle-blower he has engaged in prosocial behavior.

Altruism and Helping Behavior

- What do we mean by prosocial behavior?
 - ▣ Helping - “an action that has the consequence of providing some benefit to or improving the well-being of another person or persons.”
 - Kinds:
 - Casual helping - Opening a door
 - Substantial personal helping - Helping someone move
 - Emotional helping - Listening to a friend’s personal problems
 - Emergency helping - Coming to the aid of a stranger with a serious problem. E.g. someone in an accident.
- Classification scheme: 3 dimensions. See Pearce and Amato (1980)

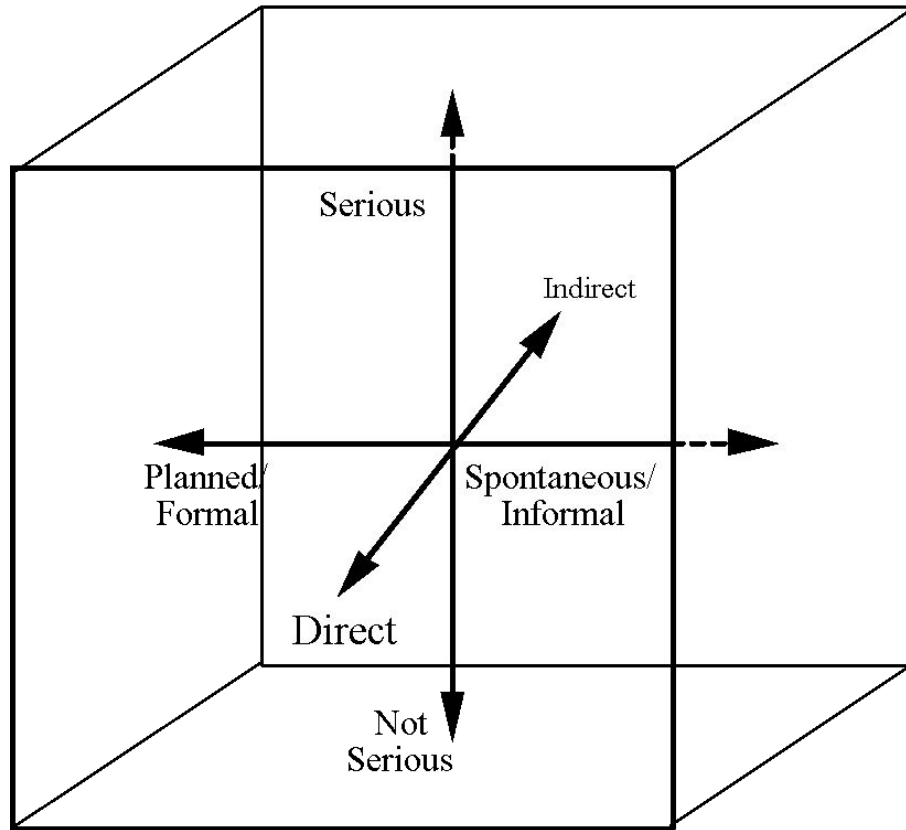


Figure 1-1

Perace and Amato's Three-Dimensional
Taxonomy of Helping Situations

Fairness and justice

- **Fairness** and **justice** are also important factors in predicting prosocial behavior.
- If employees perceive the company they work for to be **fair and just**, they are more likely to be good “company citizens.”
- For example, they are more likely to voluntarily help others in the workplace and more likely to promote the excellence of their employer, without any promise of reward for these behaviors.

The presence of others can stimulate prosocial behavior

- The presence of others can stimulate prosocial behavior, such as when someone acts more properly because other people are watching.



Others will see how much you contribute.

The presence of others can stimulate prosocial behavior

- Public circumstances generally promote prosocial behavior, as shown by the following experiments.
- Participants sat alone in a room and followed tape-recorded instructions. Half believed that they were being observed via a one-way mirror (public condition), whereas others believed that no one was watching (private condition).

The presence of others can stimulate prosocial behavior

- At the end of the experiment, the tape-recorded instructions invited the participant to make a donation by leaving some change in the jar on the table.
- The results showed that donations **were seven times higher** in the public condition than in the private condition.
- Apparently, one important reason for generous helping is to make (or sustain) a good impression on the people who are watching.

The presence of others can stimulate prosocial behavior

One purpose of prosocial behavior, especially at cost to self, is to get **oneself accepted into the group**, so doing prosocial things without recognition is less beneficial.

Self-interest dictates acting prosocially if it helps one belong to the group.

That is probably why prosocial behavior increases when others are watching.

The presence of others can stimulate prosocial behavior

It may seem cynical to say that people's prosocial actions are motivated by wanting to make a good impression.

Reciprocity

- **Reciprocity is defined as the obligation to return in kind what another has done for us.**
- Reciprocity norms are found in all cultures in the world. If I do something for you, and you don't do anything back for me, I'm likely to be upset or offended, and next time around I may not do something for you.
- If you do something for me, and I don't reciprocate, I'm likely to feel guilty about it.

Reciprocity

- Reciprocity is also found in animals other than humans. For example, social grooming (cleaning another animal's fur) is reciprocated in many species.



Reciprocity

- **Does reciprocity apply to seeking help as well as giving help?**

Reciprocity

- Often you might need or want help, but you might not always accept help and certainly might not always seek it out.
- People's willingness to request or accept help often depends on whether they think they will be able to pay it back (i.e., reciprocity).

Reciprocity

- If they don't think they can pay the helper back, they are less willing to let someone help them.
- This is especially a problem among the elderly because their declining health and income are barriers to reciprocating.

Reciprocity

- As a result, they may refuse to ask for help even when they need it, simply because they believe they will not be able to pay it back.
- **People often have an acute sense of fairness when they are on the receiving end of someone else's generosity or benevolence, and they prefer to accept help when they think they can pay the person back.**

Altruism and Helping Behavior

- ▣ **Altruism: A specific kind of helping in which the benefactor provides aid without the anticipation of rewards from external sources for providing the help (J. Piliavin)**
- ▣ **Or, helping purely out of the desire to benefit someone else, with no benefit (and often a cost) to oneself (Aronson et al, 2004, p. 382)**
- ▣ **Or, helping motivated by concern for another person (Batson)**

No anticipation of rewards

Desire to benefit someone else

Helping motivated by concern for another person

- ▣ **Cooperation:**
 - ▣ Different from helping
 - ▣ All contribute, and all benefit

▣ History of thought regarding prosocial behaviors

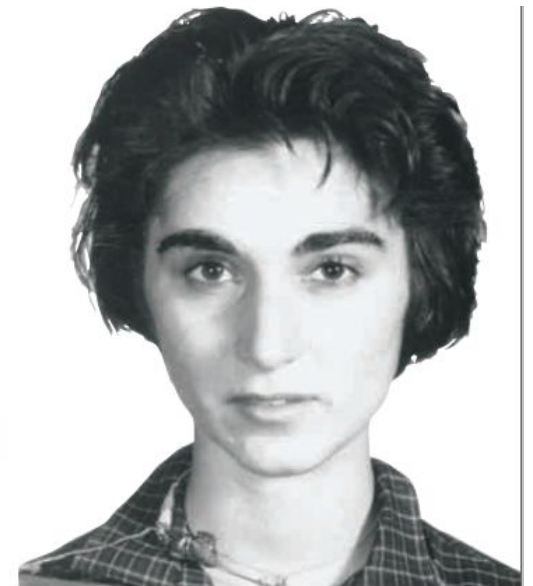
- Folk tales often are about helping other people
- Religious writings all preach charity
 - **Quran:** word *zakah* refers to charity and voluntary contributions as expressions of kindness; means to comfort those less fortunate; balance of responsibilities between individuals and society
 - **Judeo-Christianity**
 - » *Talmud:* benevolence is one of the pillars upon which the world rests
 - » *Old Testament:* You should love your neighbor as yourself
 - » *New Testament:* And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them
 - **Confucious:** wisdom, benevolence and fortitude, these are the universal virtues
 - **Lao-Tze:** part of being a good person is “to help [others] in their straits; to rescue them from their perils”.

Does all this preaching suggest that we are not naturally helpful?

Altruism and Helping Behavior

- Scientific study of prosocial behavior: beginnings
 - Triggering event: the Kitty Genovese incident
 - Catherine Susan "Kitty" Genovese (July 7, 1935 – March 13, 1964) was a New York City woman who was stabbed to death by Winston Moseley near her home in Kew Gardens, a neighborhood in the borough of Queens in New York City, on March 13, 1964.

On March 13, 1964, Kitty Genovese was attacked by a knife-wielding rapist outside her apartment in Queens, New York, while several of her neighbors watched from their windows.



Altruism and Helping Behavior

- Scientific study of prosocial behavior: beginnings
 - Triggering event: the Kitty Genovese incident
 - Two weeks later, a newspaper article reported the circumstances of Genovese's murder and the supposed lack of reaction from numerous neighbors during the stabbing. This common portrayal of her neighbors as being fully aware of what was transpiring but completely unresponsive went on to become a psychological paradigm and an urban legend, but has since been criticized as inaccurate.
 - The portrayal, erroneous though it was, prompted investigation into the social psychological phenomenon that has become known as the **bystander effect** or "**Genovese syndrome**", especially diffusion of responsibility.

Altruism and Helping Behavior

- Scientific study of prosocial behavior: beginnings
 - Triggering event: the Kitty Genovese incident
 - Question raised was “Why *don't* people help”
 - Field thus did not begin looking at helping, but rather at *non*-helping
 - Darley and Latane series of studies designed as analogs of the incident

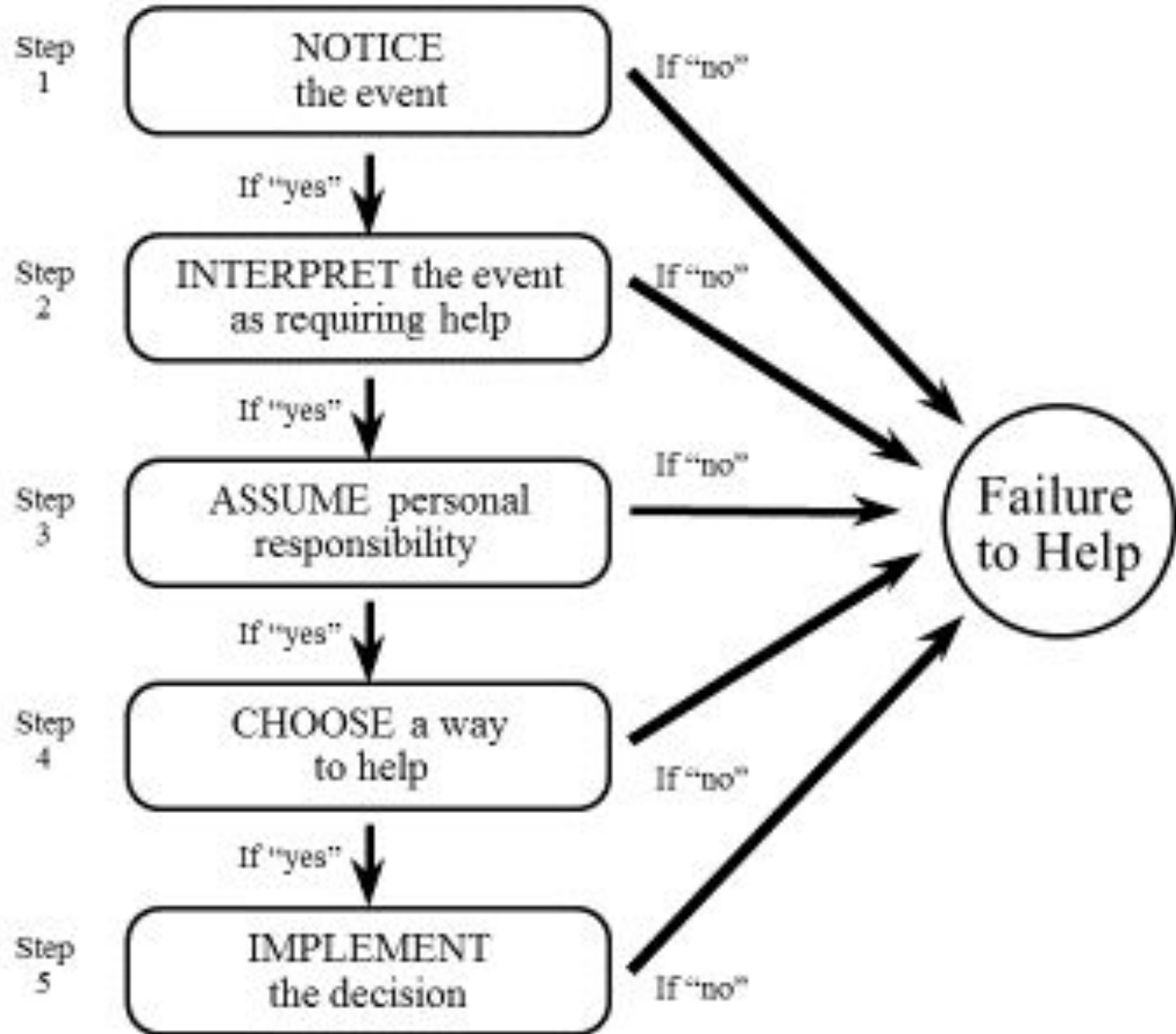


Figure 3-1: Steps in the Latané and Darley decision model of bystander intervention

Arousal and Helping Behavior

Pillivain et. al. 1981

» Observation of another's crisis □ arousal

» Arousal increases , gets more unpleasant over time □ increased motivation to reduce it

The theory J. Pelliavin to develop at this point assumes that the observation of another person having an emergency leads to a state of emotional and physiological arousal in the bystander.

The arousal can be interpreted in a variety of ways: compassion, fear, disgust, etc.

Arousal will be higher:

- (1) the more you can empathize with the victim;
- (2) the closer you are to the emergency;
- (3) the longer the emergency goes on without anyone doing anything to ameliorate it.

The response will be determined by a calculation of the costs and rewards of helping or not helping. The bystander enters the following decision matrix.

Altruism and Helping Behavior

Costs for Direct Help



		Costs for Direct Help	
		<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
Costs for No Help to the Victim	<i>High</i>	Direct Intervention	Indirect Intervention or  Redefinition of the situation, disparagement of victim, diffusion of responsibility
	<i>Low</i>	Variable: A function of perceived norms in the situation	Leave the scene, ignore, deny 

Figure 3-4. Costs for direct help and costs for no help to the victim combine to determine how people will respond. (Adapted from Piliavin et al., 1981.)

Altruism and Helping Behavior

- Clark & Word research (1972): the role of ambiguity in diffusion of responsibility
 - Method:
 - “Victim” was an apparent maintenance worker, who walks into adjacent room with ladder and window blinds
 - »Unambiguous: loud crash, groans of pain
 - »Ambiguous: just the loud crash
 - Results

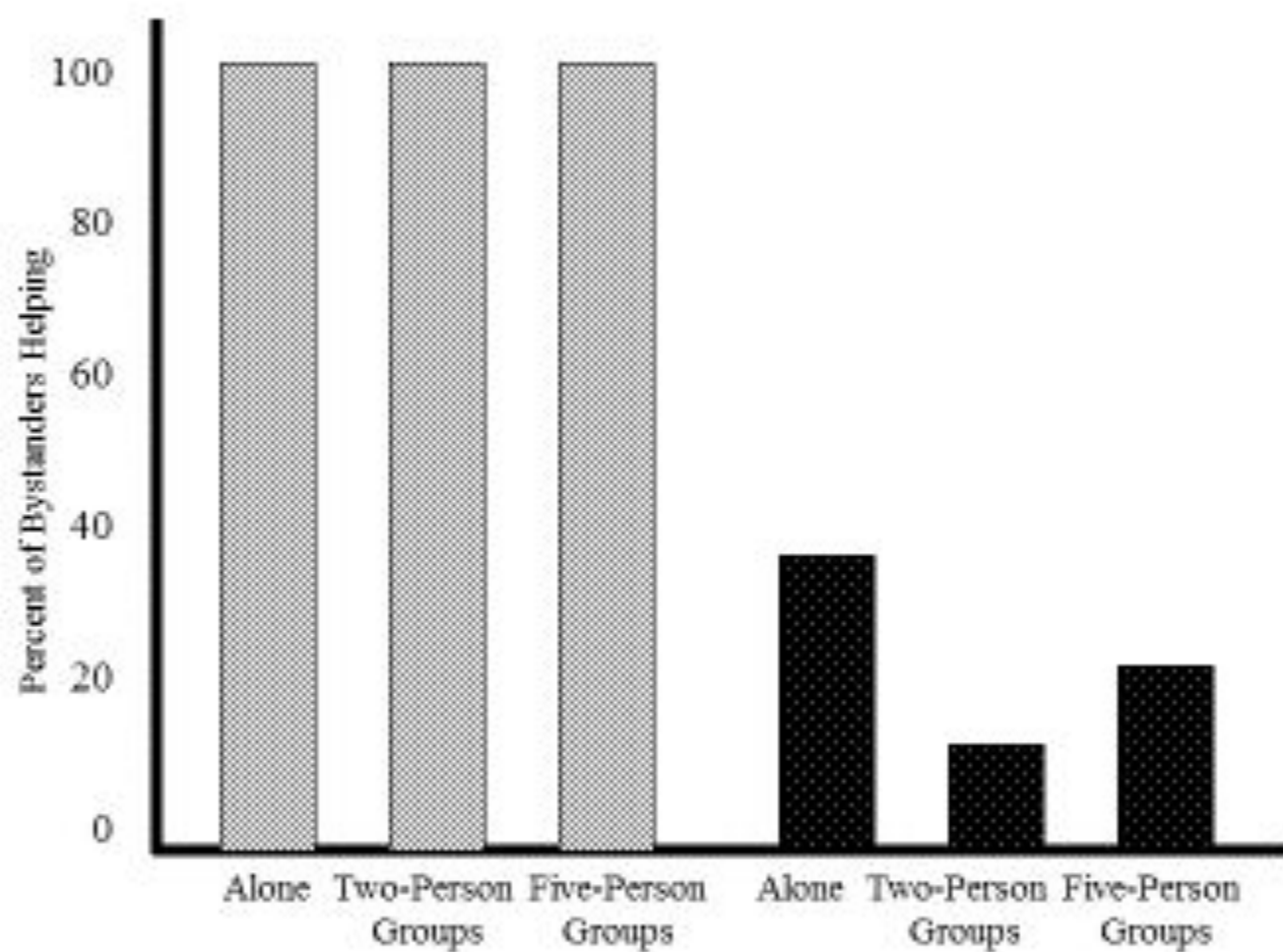


Figure 3.3: The impact of informational social influence is in ambiguous than in unambiguous situations. (Adapted from Clark & Word, 1972.)

Altruism and Helping Behavior

– Research by Gaertner and Dovidio on arousal

– Purpose: wanted to show that arousal must be attributed to the other's emergency for it to motivate helping

– The “misattribution” paradigm

» Gave subjects a pill

» Two conditions: For half, told it would arouse them, for other half that it would not

» Somewhat ambiguous emergency is presented

» Results : First group helped 55%; 2nd group helped 85% of time and faster

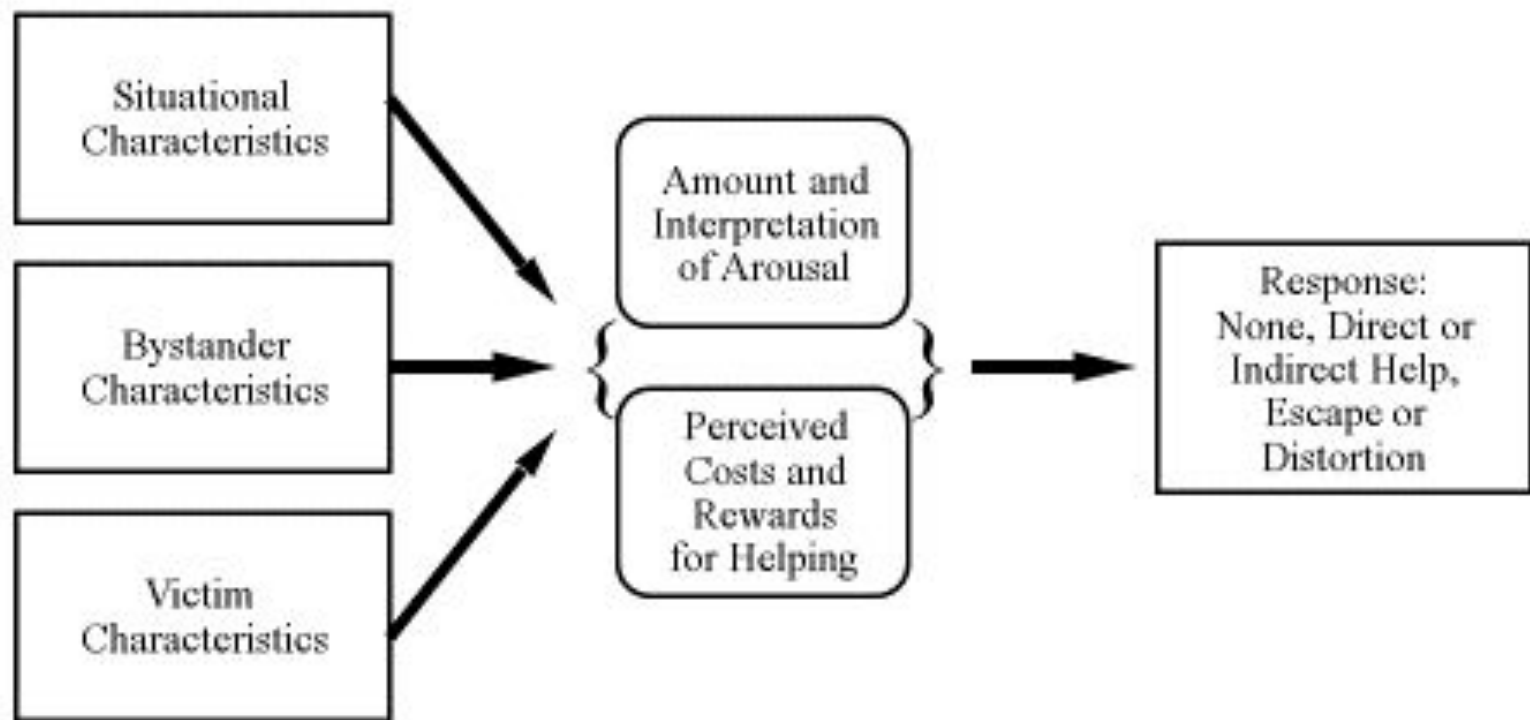


Figure 4.2: Simplified version of the arousal: cost-reward model

Motives of helping

The 19th-century philosopher Auguste Comte (1875) described two forms of helping based on very different motives.

- One form he called **egoistic helping**, in which the helper wants something in return for offering help. The helper's goal is to increase his or her own welfare (such as by making a friend, creating an obligation to reciprocate, or just making oneself feel good).
- The other form he called **altruistic helping**, in which the helper expects nothing in return for offering help. The helper's goal in this case is to increase another's welfare.
- Psychologists, philosophers, and others have debated this distinction ever since.

Motives of helping

- These two different types of helping are produced by two different types of motives.
- Altruistic helping is motivated by **empathy**.
- The sharing of feelings makes people want to help the sufferer to feel better.

Motives of helping

- According to the **empathy–altruism hypothesis** **empathy motivates people to** reduce **other** people's distress, as by helping or comforting them.
- How can we tell the difference between egoistic and altruistic motives?
- When **empathy is low**, people can reduce their **own distress** either by helping the person in need or by escaping the situation so they don't have to see the person suffer any longer.
- **If empathy is high**, however, then simply shutting your eyes or leaving the situation won't work because the other person is still suffering. **In that case, the only solution is to help the victim feel better.**

Emotions Cause helping Behavior

- Researchers have long known that sad, depressed moods make people more helpful.
- This could be true for multiple reasons—for example, that sadness makes people have more empathy for another person's suffering and need or that sadness makes people less concerned about their own welfare.

Altruism and Helping Behavior

Origins and Development of Prosocial Behavior

Altruism and Helping Behavior

- The origins of prosocial behavior: Biology

- **How “altruism” is defined by biologists?**

- Inherent conflict between Darwin’s idea of the survival of the fittest and the idea that altruism could be built in: truly altruistic animals often die.

- » Define altruism as “any action that involves some costs for the helper but increases the likelihood that other members of their species will survive, reproduce, and thus pass their genes on to successive generations.”

- » **For them the gene pool is the beneficiary of altruism, not the organism**

Altruism and Helping Behavior

–New evolutionary perspectives

- Selection based on genes, not organisms
 - Ridley & Dawkins (1984) “The animal can be regarded as a machine designed to preserve copies of the genes inside it”(p.32)
 - It is the fittest *genes* that survive, not the fittest *organisms*

Altruism and Helping Behavior

- It is clear that receiving help increases the likelihood of passing one's genes on to the next generation, but what about giving help?
- In the animal world, the costs of helping are easy to spot. A hungry animal that gives its food to another has less left for itself.
- Selfish animals that don't share are less likely to starve. Hence evolution should generally favor selfish, unhelpful creatures. Indeed, Richard Dawkins (1976/1989) wrote a book titled *The Selfish Gene*

Altruism and Helping Behavior

- According to Dawkins, genes are selfish in that they build “survival machines” (like human beings!) to increase the number of copies of themselves. In a 2011 interview, Dawkins said: “Genes try to maximize their chance of survival.”
- The successful ones crawl down through the generations. The losers, and their hosts, die off. A gene for helping the group could not persist if it endangered the survival of the individual.

Kin selection theory

- Kin selection theory

- **Much animal evidence that parents will sacrifice for their offspring**, e.g. birds that fake injury in presence of predators to lead them away from the nest

- **How does this make evolutionary sense?**

- » If gene is basis for selection, if parent dies but saves two or more offspring (who share half its genes) then those genes will be as (or more) likely to survive than if the parent survives

- » This can be generalized to other more distant kin relationships

Kin selection theory

One way that evolution might support some helping is between parents and children.

- Parents who helped their children more would be more successful at passing on their genes. Although evolution favors helping one's children, children have less at stake in the survival of their parents' genes. Thus, parents should be more devoted to their children, and more willing to make sacrifices to benefit them, than children should be to their parents.

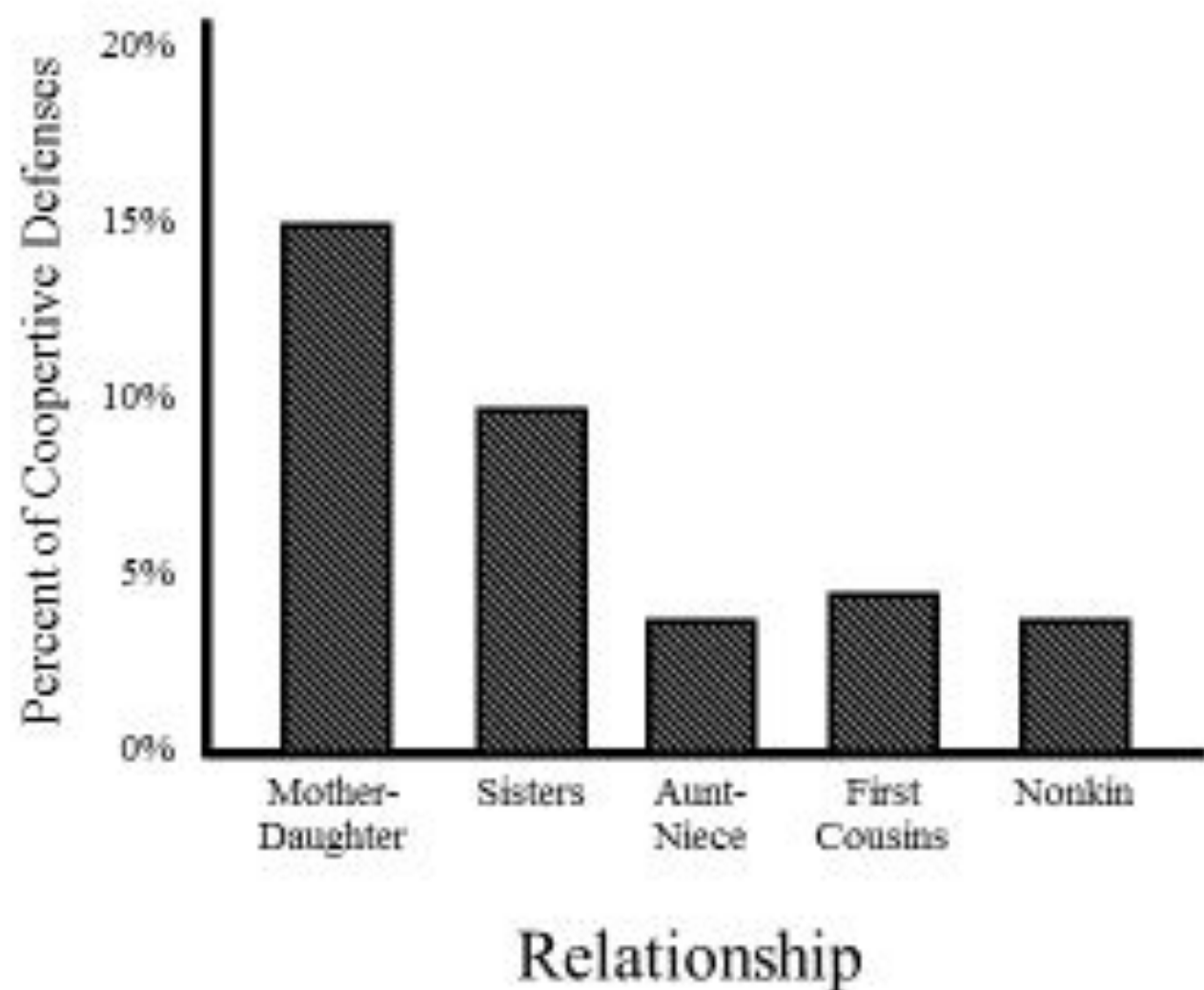
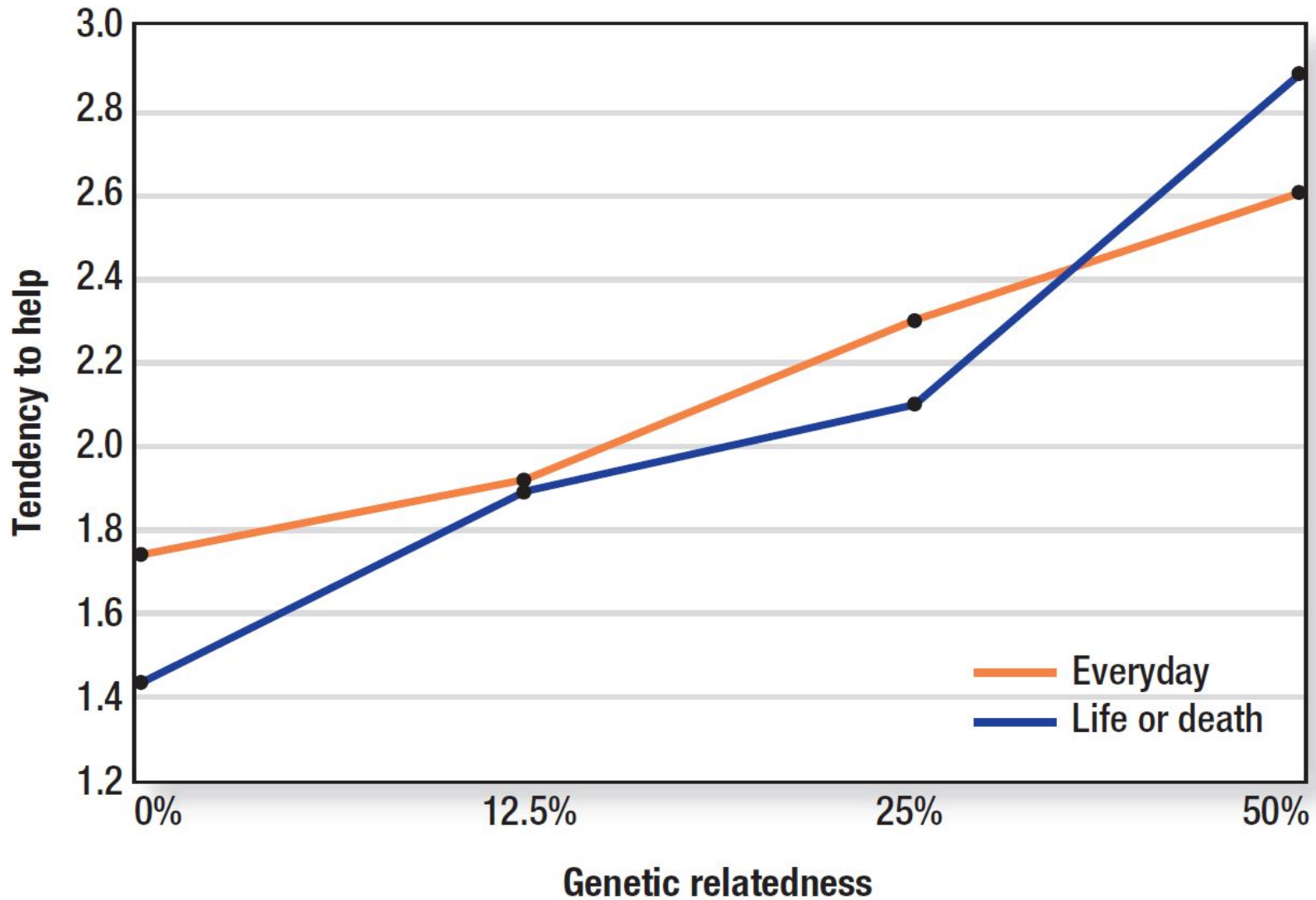


Figure 2-1: More closely-related squirrels are more cooperative in the defense of space. (Adapted from Sherman, 1981.)

Kin selection theory

- For example, you should be more likely to help a sibling (who shares one-half of your genes) than a nephew (who shares one-fourth of your genes) or a cousin (who shares one-eighth of your genes).
- Plenty of research evidence suggests that people do help their family members and close relatives more than they help other people. In both life-or-death and everyday situations, we are more likely to help others who share our genes.
- **Life-or-death helping is affected more strongly by genetic relatedness than is everyday helping (see Figure).**

As genetic relatedness increases, helping also increases, in both everyday situations and life-or-death situations. Source: Burnstein et al. (1994).



Kin selection theory

Research has shown that genetically identical twins (who share 100% of their genes) help each other significantly more than fraternal twins (who share 50% of their genes).

Kin selection theory

Thus, the natural patterns of helping (that favor family and other kin) are still there in human nature.

However, people do help strangers and non-kin much more than other animals do.

People are not just like other animals, but they are not completely different either.

Altruism and Helping Behavior: Group Selection theory

- **Group selection theory**

- Most controversial proposal

- Argues that although individual altruists may be at an evolutionary disadvantage, *groups* with more altruists may out-compete *groups* that have fewer

- Has been tested in computer simulations

- Do *groups* with more altruists out-compete *groups* that have fewer?

- TRUST

- Social capital

The development of prosocial behaviour

- When the adult researcher dropped something, the human toddlers immediately tried to help, such as by crawling over to where it was, picking it up, and giving it to him.
- (The babies also seemed to understand and empathize with the adult's mental state.
If the researcher simply threw something on the floor, the babies didn't help retrieve it. They only helped if the adult seemed to want help.)

The development of prosocial behaviour

- The researchers then repeated this experiment with chimpanzees.
- The chimps were much less helpful, even though the human researcher was a familiar friend. This work suggests that humans are hardwired to cooperate and help each other from early in life, and that this is something that sets humans apart from even their closest animal relatives.

The development of prosocial behaviour

- The development of prosocial behavior: theories and research
 - Central question: How do prosocial behaviors change as humans mature and are socialized?
 - What processes are responsible?
 - How long do these processes continue through life?

Altruism and Helping Behavior

- Cialdini's model of learning to help

– Stages:

- **Pre-socialization stage.** Will help if asked (or threatened if they don't) but helping has no positive associations. Up to age 10 or so.
- **Awareness stage .** Now know that helping is valued. May initiate help, but mainly to please adults. External norms. Study by Froming et al (1985) found that kids gave more in presence of adults at this age, but not those in earlier stage.
- **Internalization stage.** Helping is now intrinsically satisfying and can make a person feel good

• **Kohlberg and Eisenberg's theories of moral reasoning**

Kohlberg and Eisenberg theories are based on asking children of different ages to decide what they would do, and why, in response to social dilemmas e.g.

“ A girl named Mary was going to a friend's birthday party. On her way, she saw a girl who had fallen down and hurt her leg. The girl asked Mary to go to her house and get her parents so the parents could take her to the doctor. But if Mary did run and get the child's parents, she would be late for the birthday party and miss the ice cream, cake, and all the games. What should Mary do? Why?”

– **These theories are not about what children do**

– **They are about children's ideas of what is right to do**

A comparison of the Kohlberg and Eisenberg models of moral reasoning

Kohlberg's model: moral reasoning

Stage 1: Pre-conventional morality: avoiding punishment

Stage 2: Pre-conventional morality: obtaining rewards

Stage 3: Conventional morality: winning approval or disapproval

Stage 4: Conventional morality: conforming to society's formal and informal rules

Stage 5: Post-conventional morality: following one's own internalized personal moral standards

Stage 6: Following ethical principles or conscience, reflecting a concern for universal justice.

Eisenberg's model: prosocial moral reasoning

Stage 1: Hedonistic, pragmatic orientation. Choice based on own needs.

Stage 2: Needs of others orientation.

Stage 3: Approval and interpersonal orientation and/or stereotyped orientation. E.g., "It's nice to help"

Stage 4a: Empathic orientation. E.g. "I know how he feels."

Stage 4b: Transitional stage. Internalized values, norms, duties mentioned but not clearly stated.

Stage 5: Strongly internalized stage: Strong statements based on values, norms, responsibilities, social contract, dignity and value of all people.

Development of cognitive empathy

- Piaget studied how children's thinking processes change qualitatively as they develop
 - **Critical aspect of his theory for us has to do with development of cognitive empathy or the ability to take the role of the other**
 - His theory has three stages
- Pre-operational stage –before age 7 – **children cannot take perspective of another person.**
- In concrete operational stage (8-11 or 12) **can take perspective of another person – see the world the way they do – but have a lot of trouble moving back and forth.**
- Abstract thinking stage starts around 13. **Can hold several ideas simultaneously – can have cognitive empathy.**

Socialisation

- Learning to be a helper: socialization
 - As children develop they are also being shaped by the people around them
 - Direct positive reinforcement
- Smith et al. (1979). Some kids given pennies after helping; others got praise. **When asked why they helped, money kids said for the money; praised kids said because they cared about the kids they helped.**
- Fabes et al (1989) used children whose mothers said they often used rewards to get kids to act prosocially. In lab, given two opportunities to help “sick and poor children” (by making games for them). After first time they helped, half were given a toy. Less than half (44%) of kids given a toy helped the second time; all of the non-toy children helped.
- **Interpretation is that kids think they helped for the toy.**

Altruism and Helping Behavior

- **Models can be virtual**

- Hearold (1986) did review of research on effects of prosocial TV and concluded
 - » They had strong positive effects
 - » Stronger than negative impact of aggressive TV
- E.g., watching prosocial TV for ½ hour for 5 days produced increases in cooperation and helping (Ahammer & Murray (1979) in Australian children

Altruism and Helping Behavior

• **Modeling**

–As with children, adults observe others and learn

–Helping example: Rushton and Campbell (1977)

2. Students walking with a confederate of the experimenter were randomly assigned either to be asked to give blood or to observe the confederate agree to give blood when asked.
3. When asked first, 25% agreed and none showed up.
4. When observing the confederate agree, 67% agreed, and 33% actually donated.

Altruism and Helping Behavior

- **Parents are most important**
 - Nurturing, warm, and powerful models have most effect
 - Strongly attached children are more empathic and prosocial
 - Parents who expect children to help around the house have more helpful children: Evidence in studies of civil rights participants, blood donors, and charitable givers indicates parental modeling of prosocial behavior

Altruism and Helping Behavior

- The altruistic personality: Does it exist? Are there reliable differences in propensity to offer help to others?
 - Research in emergency intervention found little evidence that personality traits were important

Altruism and Helping Behavior

- **Some evidence of interactions of person X situation**
- Example of person X situation in emergencies. Wilson (1976) measured a dimension of personality that can best be described as **self-esteem or self-confidence**.
- Those highest on this dimension showed **little if any diffusion of responsibility** (80% helped in presence of passive bystander), while those middling to low on the dimension were heavily influenced (20 % and 12.5%).

Uncommon people: The traits of heroes

- Helping during the Holocaust: The Oliners' work

–Method

Uncommon people: The traits of heroes

– Uncommon people: The traits of heroes

- Helping during the Holocaust: The Oliners' work

–Method

- Sam Oliner a Polish Holocaust survivor, hidden by a Christian farmer from whom his family used to buy food
- Oliners' method : found 231 people who had helped Jews: rescuers were matched with 126 people from same towns with same demographic characteristics.

Uncommon people: The traits of heroes

- **Findings : characteristics of heroes**
 - Perceived more similarities between themselves and Jews than did non-helpers
 - Parents less likely to use physical punishment
 - Modeled on a parent who was highly moral

Uncommon people: The traits of heroes

- **Findings : characteristics of heroes**

- **Personality traits**

- Higher in dispositional empathy
 - Greater willingness to accept responsibility for actions
 - Extensivity – able to feel concern for people regardless of similarity to or differences from them.
 - Self-efficacy: will be able to do what they set out to do

- **Consistency over time:** Oliner found 40 years after the war (1980's) rescuers were more helpful than non-rescuers.

- Participants were more likely to be involved in fund-raising, donating money, organizing for social causes, volunteering.

Uncommon people: The traits of heroes

- Midlarsky, Jones, and Corley (2005) did another similar comparison of rescuers and non-rescuers.
- Actually gave them measures of empathy, social responsibility, and sense of control and rescuers scored higher.

The prosocial personality: ordinary people

- Do ordinary helpers have the personality traits of heroes?
- Davis Empathy measure: Items like, “I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.” and “I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.”
 - Personal efficacy – starting in childhood self-confident people are more likely to help

The prosocial personality: ordinary people

- “Big Five” personality traits

- Agreeableness - more cooperative with others, volunteer more to help others
- Conscientiousness - more active blood donors
- Botox: higher in organizational citizenship behavior – helping others at work
- Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is a concept that describes a person's voluntary commitment within an organization or company that is not part of his or her contractual tasks. OCB has been studied since the late 1970s. Over the past three decades, interest in these behaviors has increased substantially. Organizational behavior has been linked to overall organizational effectiveness, thus these types of employee behaviors have important consequences in the workplace.

Thank you!

