



# Society as reflected by psychological processes

**Edited by Paszkál Kiss**

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## Foreword

Social psychology is generally defined as the scientific study of how the social context influences information processing, emotional response, making judgments and social behavior in general. Social is often understood here as representing the immediate situation of the individual response. It is rare that social psychologist try to actually operationalize the more distant influences of societal context. In this collection of papers we guide the reader to make these further steps for an extended understanding of the social. We may realize that motivation-, representation-, judgment processes, and behavior are fundamentally shaped by cultural and societal factors. Social phenomena that social psychologists study do not appear in a social and cultural vacuum, they are appear interrelated in a wider societal context. Their relationship also has a history that it is shaped by past interactions and shared influences. Studying the individual processes as shaped by a socio-cognitive metasystem is not the norm is social psychology and it is also challenging in methodological terms (Doise et al., 1993; De Rosa, 1994). These effects might not be easy to grasp and when foreseen not suitable for tests in conventional methods. The general assumption that social/societal processes are controlling and motivating individual response is not easy to operationalize.

Our own research at the Department of Social and Educational Psychology has integrated societal and historical processes into stereotype research, political psychology, communication research understanding human judgments in general for a long time. Well before social cognition researchers acknowledged that there is something more than cold information processes to human social behavior. Our colleagues apply contemporary (e.g. System Justification Theory) and more traditional (e.g. Social Representation Theory, Social Identity Theory) research paradigms to address the question of social influences at a systemic societal level. We share an interest of integrating societal (political-cultural) factors into our explanations, but we differ in many other respects. We are devoted to a wide range of different approaches and we also tend to be interested in different social phenomena as you will see in the chapters of this volume.

The chapters are arranged around broader topics. The first chapter presents a contemporary analysis of rational choice and it is a general introduction to behavioral economics. It explores how 'the human needs' can be understood more as the basis for judgments and behavior. The second chapter raises a somewhat related problem of social justice perception and the causal explanations related to it. It provides further examples of perceiving the social system through stereotypes and introduces the reader to the contemporary social psychological explanations for stereotyping. In the third paper a detailed analysis is made on the relationship between individual and social-societal processes by an attempt to integrate theories of Social Representation and Social Identity. The case of national identity is used there to show the benefits of searching for a thorough integration of different theoretical paradigms in social psychology. The fourth paper opens a topic that is intensely discussed today, the uses of new media. It shows how social different social psychological accounts may help us understanding its development and its extended influence on our everyday life. This is followed by a second paper on communication that explores its uses and abuses in organizational contexts.

Societal analysis is not only a tool for understanding how systemic forces might affect individuals or groups, it may also help to conceptualize how these individuals or groups can change existing social systems by their own reactions. We hope that thought provoking examples for these reciprocal influences will be found in in this book, which has a primary goal of providing backgrounds for our courses that cannot be found fast and prepared in other textbooks.

The Editor

# The Birth of Economic Value – Needs and Substitutions

László Mérió

## Exchange creates value

Imagine Mr. Bookish once received a room bicycle as a gift. He tried it once or twice, but got frightened of the strange muscle deposits in his legs, so the bike is just getting dusty in a corner of his apartment. At the same time, Mr. Fitness has a beautiful set of chess getting dusty in his apartment; although he tried to lift its nice figures, but found them too light.

Once, Mr. Bookish and Mr. Fitness have a conversation and decide as a result that they would exchange the two articles with each other. Both rub their hands that they have made an excellent exchange. Both feel they became richer as a result of the exchange. Now the question is if the amount of goods in society have increased or not, i.e., if any new value has been created by the exchange. The first reaction of most people is a definite no, as we have only one room bike and one set of chess both before and after the exchange, nothing new is created.

Had this been so, the good feelings of the two parties would be just some vague psychological thing that is totally unimportant for economics. This is partly true. From the perspective of economics it is unimportant why Mr. Bookish is happier with the nice set of chess than with the room bicycle, and why the attitude of Mr. Fitness is just the reverse. But once this is so, then it is literally true that both of them have become richer with the exchange: they both gained more than what they paid.

Economics usually does not talk about new material goods, but about gains (or utilities) and costs. And similarly to all science, it views its subject in a more general and abstract way than everyday thinking does. In economics, everything is considered as utility if at least one person finds it useful for himself, and if he is willing to give up another useful thing in order to obtain it. In the economic sense, obtaining a car or a bottle of beer is a utility just as much as health, watching a movie, or sunbathing for an hour are. Cost is all those utilities we sacrifice for the sake of obtaining another gain—and we do not talk about material things only.

Furthermore, economics does not talk about new material goods, because it would be difficult to define what comprises “new material”. Not a single new atom is born in a shoe factory. The activity of the factory called (and accepted by everybody as) production simply re-arranges the existing atoms into a new, more useful form; this is how using up raw hide, tannin, and many more things will come out as shoes in the end. Almost all production produces utility by re-arranging existing materials into a more useful form.

This is exactly what the exchange between Mr. Bookish and Mr. Fitness did: it brought previously existing materials into a more useful arrangement. It also created new value, similarly to a shoe factory. It also increased the amount of value in society, or its general richness. The new product in the course of exchange was not the room bicycle or the set of chess, but the fact that both objects found a place where their usefulness is greater than before. *This* new product does have real value or utility, this is why exchange increased the wealth of society.

It is a common erroneous belief that an exchange is correct only if goods of equal value are exchanged. An exchange is *never* the exchange of equal values; if it were so, it would be of no sense.

It makes sense only if both parties sacrifice something that is of less value *to them* in exchange for something that is more valuable *for them*. If I am a baker, I am glad to provide my shoe-maker neighbor with bread in exchange for shoes. And not because bread is of no value to me. It does have a value, because I sacrifice something in producing it. Even if I find the flour and other ingredients in the street, I sacrifice an hour of watching television or sunbathing when baking the bread.

The room bicycle or the set of chess were not totally useless for their previous owners, either, otherwise, they would have gotten rid of these dust-catchers a long time ago—somebody would have been glad to take them away for a few bucks. But both of them found an opportunity to exchange these objects for something that is really more valuable for them only now.

Mr. Bookish would not have sold it to a merchant for a price that would have been more than enough to buy the same set of chess Mr. Fitness gave him in exchange. Mr. Bookish got it as a gift a long time ago from his aunt who misjudged him, but who is still dear to his heart. The situation was the same with Mr. Fitness and his set of chess. In order for the exchange to take place, they had to discuss all this. This discussion opened the psychological possibility toward the exchange: it was not only two objects that got exchanged, but two stories about the gifts as well. Afterwards, both of them could resolve their cognitive dissonance of wanting to get rid of their dear gifts. We already know that it is easily possible that years later Mr. Bookish will tell the story of the beautiful set of chess to his grand children as “you know, this is the one I received from Aunt Mary...”

The informal conversation between Mr. Bookish and Mr. Fitness created real economic value. Similarly, the change created in the students’ heads, or the change brought about by the doctor in his patients’ body have an economic value, and so does the psychological change that makes it possible to realize an economic possibility. The discussion between Mr. Bookish and Mr. Fitness also increased the wealth in society. It would have increased it even if for some reason or other the actual exchange would not have taken place, for the psychological change did come about. Once we learn to notice such things, we’ll easily find more far reaching examples of the value-creating role of informal human relations and various other psychological mechanisms in the economy.

## The principle of comparative advantages

Imagine an abstract, but illuminating mini society that has only three producers, A, B, and C, and they produce only two products, food (its unit is  $1f$ ) and clothing (its unit is  $1c$ ). In this mini society any unit of food can replace any other unit of food, and the situation is the same with clothing. However, the capabilities of the three producers are different:

Producer	Amount of food the producer can produce in a day	Amount of clothing the producer can produce in a day	Examples of possible production
A	$4f$	$8c$	$4f$ , or $8c$ , or $1f+6c$ , etc.
B	$3f$	$3c$	$3f$ , or $3c$ , or $1f+2c$ , etc.
C	$2f$	$1c$	$2f$ , or $1c$ , or $1f+.5c$ , etc.

The third examples of the last column is calculated the following way: A spends a quarter of his time producing food and three quarters of his time producing clothes, B spends a third of his time producing food and two thirds of his time producing clothes, and C spends an equal amount of time on food- and clothes-production. For the sake of simplicity, the cost of transition from one task to the other (e.g., time-demand) is taken as zero. Everybody is free to choose the kind of products he wishes to make, but their capabilities are fixed.

Our first question is: Imagine that the producers are not so free after all, because there is a dictator, D, in this society, who does not produce anything, just dictates. D determines that the whole society needs  $1f$  amount of food a day to make everybody sated, but any amount of clothes will go off. In fact, the more clothes people have, the happier they are. D wishes to make his people as happy as possible. Whom should he command to produce the single unit of food?

Usually, the first thought of common sense is that it is A, for he can produce the necessary food quickly (in a quarter of a day), then everybody can peacefully concentrate on clothes production. Everybody would spend more time on producing  $1f$ , for A is the most efficient. But let's do some calculation.

If A produces  $1f$ , he can still produce  $(3/4)*8c=6c$  in the remaining three quarters of his time, while B and C produce only clothes, i.e.,  $3+1$  units. Thus, in sum,  $10c$  are produced in addition to the  $1f$  in a day.

If B produces  $1f$ , he can produce  $2c$  in addition, and together with the  $8+1$  units of clothes produced by A and C, the total production of clothes will be  $11c$ .

If C produces  $1f$ , he can produce half a unit of clothes in addition, while A and B produce  $3+8$  units of clothes, so the total production of clothes will be  $11.5 c$ .

Thus, the wisest decision D can make is order C to produce the necessary food, despite C spending half of the day with this task. If this was your first intuitive answer, you either have a very good sense for mathematics, or you are already sufficiently inoculated by economic thinking.

In economic thinking the question is not who produces what and how fast, but what one sacrifices in the process, how much his cost of production is. Producer A sacrifices the production of two units of clothes for the production of one unit of food, this sacrifice is one unit for B, while for C it is only half a unit. This way, it becomes clear immediately that C can produce food the most cheaply (i.e., with the least sacrifice). Once we have acquired the world of thought of economics, this will not be the result of some obscure calculation, but it will be self-evident.

Clumsy little C, who is the slowest in producing anything, is suddenly promoted to the most efficient food producer. It was not D who promoted him, because he has always been there—not in the absolute sense, but in the sense that he is the one who sacrifices the least for producing food. The *principle of comparative advantages* became manifest in our example. This principle states that it is *not the absolute advantages, but the relative efficiency that counts in determining what is worth producing by whom*.

In international trade the principle of comparative advantages prevails. It is possible that after the investment of a huge green-house project, Germany could produce even coffee beans at a lower cost than Brazil, but this is not a branch of industry that requires high precision, or where Germany would have a comparative advantage. Thus, even if Germany had the money for this project, she would spend it on something else.

In our example, A had absolute advantage in the production of all products, but had a relative disadvantage against both B and C in producing food, because in producing food A would have to sacrifice the production of more clothes than B or C. At the same time, A not only has an absolute advantage, but a comparative advantage as well in producing clothes. But even this is not automatic: it may even happen that many people have a comparative advantage over the world's best.

Imagine a lawyer whose hobby is typing, and who does it so well that he becomes world champion in typing. Should he type his documents afterwards? The answer is: not necessarily. It depends on how good a lawyer he is. If he is the 100<sup>th</sup> best lawyer, he is certain to lose with typing his papers. No

matter how much he loves typing, his boss will justly tell him to type at home as a hobby and not in the office for a class A *lawyer's* salary.

Notwithstanding, it is not surprising that this lawyer chose to make a living as a lawyer rather than as a typist. That is the field where he has a comparative advantage, even if he is only the 100<sup>th</sup> as a lawyer and the first as a typist. Furthermore, he will find the competition as a lawyer less keen than as a typist. If three lawyers become better than him, he will still be the 103<sup>rd</sup>, not making much of a difference in his life. Naturally, this does not mean that he can relax as a lawyer at all. If he does not perform as expected of a lawyer in the 100<sup>th</sup> position, sooner or later he'll be paid only as the 1000<sup>th</sup> lawyer and his boss will not mind typing his own documents at a magical speed. And if he performs even worse, he may type the documents of others for a class A *typist* salary. By that time that is where he'll have a comparative advantage.

We do not necessarily have to be the best in something. Only one person can be the best, and we are many. Furthermore, it is possible that even the best will not do what he is the best in, because he may have a comparative advantage in something else. What is important: we should find the area where we have a comparative advantage over others. This is not always easy in a society where more than two things can be done. It is still worth it, because this is how we can best contribute not only to our own, but to society's well-being as well.

The principle of comparative advantages is actually a psychological principle, too. In a psychological adaptation: people in their choices generally consider the comparative advantages rather than the absolute ones, although this is usually not a conscious approach. When a great Hungarian actor, Miklós Gábor died, Tamás Révbíró wrote in memory of him: "Girls we were in love with were in love with him. They were realists, so eventually they became our wives, but he occupied the first place in their hearts. And it was all right. We were happy with the second place, because we all knew that it is not only impossible to compete with him, but it is not necessary, either". Let's be less elevated: we all had a comparative advantage even over Miklós Gábor, and without especially struggling for it.

This "miklós-gábor" is a very scarce thing. So are we, even if not as much so as the "miklós-gábor", but our comparative advantage (some in this, some in that) ensures that we are relatively even scarcer in some things. If we can make the best of it, girls do not have to be painfully realists, our comparative advantage will prevail in their choices. The principle of comparative advantages often works very well as a psychological explanatory principle. The power of the world of thought of economics is shown by the fact that this far-reaching principle was not discovered by psychologists, but by a British economist, David Ricardo in 1817.

## The problem of exchange rates

The promotion of C as the most efficient food producer was not caused by the logic of dictatorship, but by that of economy. Now, imagine a totally different society, a kind of communism where no dictator is needed, but people as good communists realize their own needs correctly. Let's say these needs are as follows:

- The daily need of A is  $4f$  and  $1c$  (he is such a glutton).
- The daily need of B is  $2f$  and  $2c$  (he is such a balanced person).
- The daily need of C is  $1f$  and  $1c$  (he is justly so modest).

We can see immediately that none of them can produce enough to meet their own needs. The whole society, however, can satisfy the need of everybody: A produces all the necessary 4 units of clothes in

half a day, plus  $2f$  in the other half. B and C produce  $3f$  and  $2f$ , respectively, thus, all the social need for  $7f$  and  $4c$  can be produced. First, “from each according to his ability”, then, overall social production can be divided “to each according to his need”.

If needs and abilities were always like this, communism would have perhaps worked. But if the situation is only slightly different, somebody should give up some if his needs—probably leading to endless debates, or rather to the appearance of a dictator. There is an old East European joke: Who invented communism, economists or biologists? The answer: economists, of course; biologists would have tested it on rats first.

In market economies, *exchange rates* develop instead of central distribution. In our example, the exchange rate between clothes and food can vary between  $1f=.5c$  and  $1f=2c$ . The exchange rates cannot fall out of this range, because everybody would be worse off. If, for example,  $1f$  fell below  $.5c$ , C, the relatively most efficient food producer would also start producing clothes, and it would not be worth producing food for anybody. On the other hand, if  $1f$  rose above  $2c$ , it would not be worth producing clothes even for A (the most efficient clothes producer), and thus, nobody would produce clothes. B is unaffected, because no matter what, he will produce whichever exchange rate is higher, for that is where he will have his actual comparative advantage. B is the best off if the exchange rate significantly deviates from 1:1. C is the best off if the value of food is the highest, and it is in the interest of A to have as high an exchange rate of clothes as possible, but both A and C are very well off if the exchange rate is 1:1.

We could see three radically different interests, and we cannot choose the golden middle road, as it is disadvantageous for B. If these three producers sat down to make an agreement, the party who would be favored by B would be better off. If, however, A and C made a coalition and agreed on 1:1, B would get the short end of the stick.

An unpleasant mathematical fact emerges here: in Section 7 we shall see that *no exchange rate exists* in which A, B, and C can all buy what they need after having produced their own goods. In vain can A, B, and C together produce their overall needs, under market conditions somebody will be unsatisfied while somebody else will have more than his need! Does mathematics say after all that there is no other way than communism, and the market is condemned to death, because it cannot satisfy needs even if production could? Let us postpone the answer for a while: we need a powerful system of thoughts for a strong argument.

## The idea of demand

Luckily, human thinking is much more flexible than what we described above. We learn it already as children that if we are asked “What do you want, a toy-car or a bar of chocolate?” we cannot say “Both”, even if we feel that both of our needs are justified. It is a starting point of economics that all goods are scarce, but all of them can more or less be substituted by another commodity. When a child learns he cannot give that answer, he also learns the fundamentals of economics. He is forced to think it over which option can he substitute with something else, like with another toy or with postponing his desire.

Exchange rates in a market economy are determined by the price of the goods. And the price we are willing to pay for a commodity is determined by what substitutes we can think of. This can be very individual: for some people a slice of turkey breast can substitute sirloin quite well, for others this is far from being the case. In the shop, however, we are no longer asked how we could substitute the products on the shelves. We are simply told the price and we either buy the product or don't. The

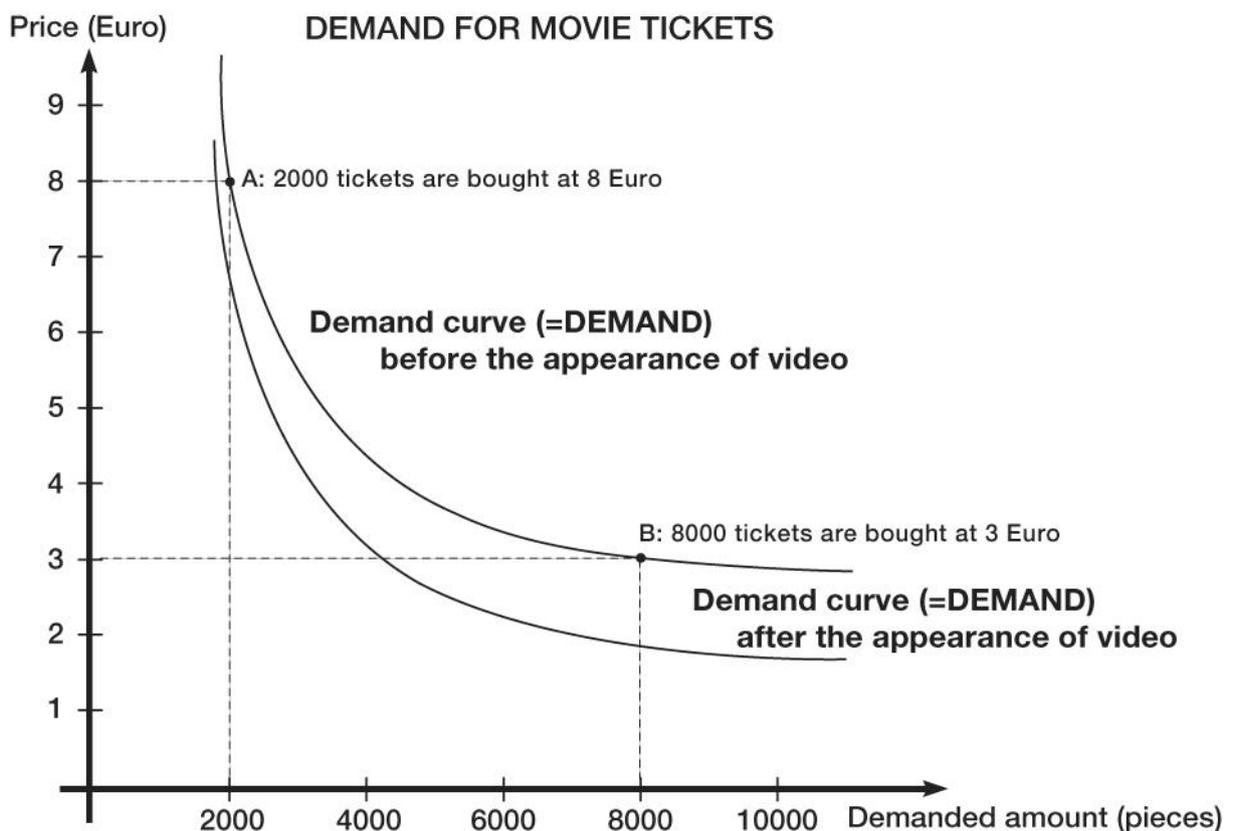
higher the price the more people can find a suitable substitute, and the less people will buy the given product.

Before we can proceed, we must clearly distinguish two concepts: the demanded quantity and the demand itself. Not only everyday speech, but often even economists use these words sloppily, and they simply talk about demand when they mean demanded quantity.

By *demanded quantity* we mean the overall amount of the product consumers are willing to buy *at a given price*. Usually, there is an inverse relationship between price and demanded quantity: the higher the price, the less the demanded quantity—although there are exceptions to the rule. For example, a commodity of high prestige is sometimes sold in greater quantity at a higher price than when it is cheap.

The demanded quantity depends on the price. It is just this relationship that is called *demand*. To put it more clearly: *the only thing that certainly does not cause a change in the demand is the price of the product*. If the demand (i.e., the demand function) does not change, then a change in the price of the product only causes current consumption to shift in a certain direction on the demand curve.

Despite all this, even demand may change in the course of times, and in the case of most products, sooner or later it does. This happens when a product becomes more or less popular, or when new substitute products appear on the market. In these cases, the whole demand curve shifts in one direction or another. When the video appeared, the demand for movie tickets decreased: no matter what the price, less tickets were sold. The whole demand curve moved down.

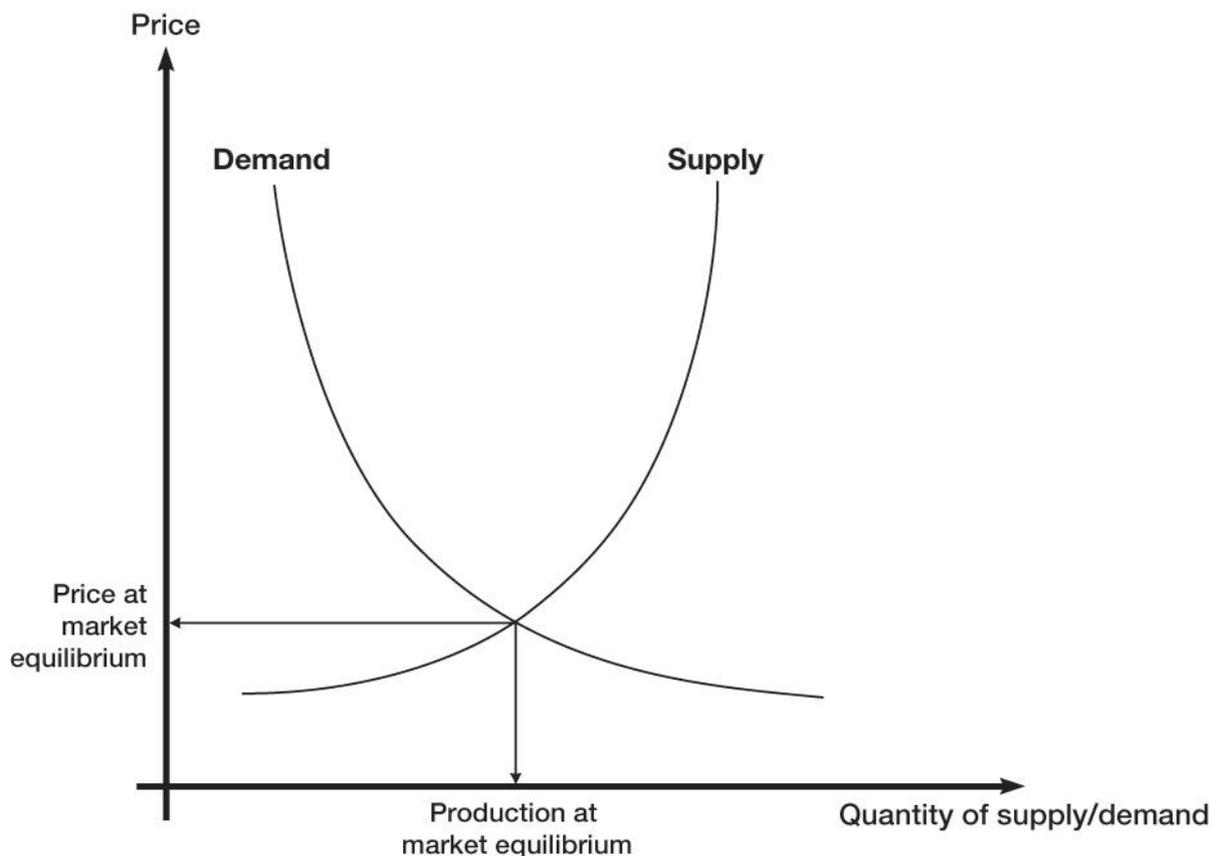


## Equilibrium in the market

What we have said about demand, its parallel can be said about supply, too. The higher the price of a product, the more producers are willing to decide on its production, rather than on something else.

Thus, we also can differentiate the quantity of supply from the supply itself. Having done so, we can even make a common figure in which the demand curve and the supply curve are plotted simultaneously, for the axes are the same: price against the quantity of the demand/supply.

If the two curves do not intersect, it means that nobody is willing to produce the good for a price anybody would buy. Normally, however, the two curves do intersect each other, and the price read at the intersection is of important economic significance. At this price, the producers are willing to produce exactly as much of the given commodity as much the consumers are willing to buy. In this case, *market equilibrium* can develop. Every product finds its consumer, and every consumer who does not wish to substitute the given product with something else at the given price can do so. In other words: there is no surplus or shortage in the market.



It is a mathematical fact that if there is free market among the producers, the market will move toward equilibrium by itself. However, this statement is true only if there are many producers on the market and the producers do not agree on the price (there are some further minor technical conditions, but we will not go into those details here).

The clever definition of demand and supply, and this mathematical fact gives an answer to our previous question of how exchange rates may develop. Remember, the problem was that in our mini society model, the interests of the three producers, A, B, and C were in sharp conflict. In fact, any two of the three of them could form a coalition that is useful for them, but very disadvantageous for the third. Well, prices on the market do not develop on the basis of such deals, but are jointly determined by demand and supply—automatically, without negotiations. Price is never determined by demand or supply alone, only by the two together. It is as if we asked which blade of a pair of scissors cuts the material. The two blades cannot function alone, they can cut only together.

Free competition market economy automatically adapts to the fact that neither human thinking, nor human needs are “all or none” in nature. Under the circumstances of market economy everybody

can make his own judgment and decide which of his needs he can or is willing to substitute with something else. Similarly, the producers, with their given abilities and instruments, can decide themselves what they prefer to produce and what they don't. Market economy offers the possibility for everyone to personally determine what needs he wants to substitute and with what, if it is necessary. They do not have to harmonize with anyone else. In market economy, it is in the interest of nobody to show his needs as more important than they really are for him, because there is nobody to show to.

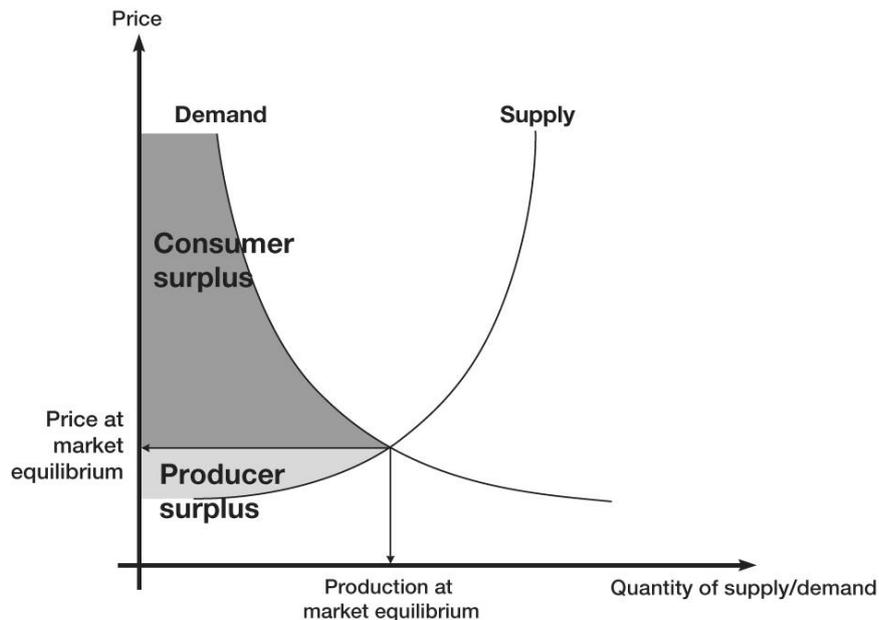
Free competition market is an automatism in which everybody, producer and consumer alike, can safely follow their own selfish interests, the overall outcome will still be an effectively functioning economy. This is true of the great part of production, but not of all in the least. There are commodities that are not worth producing by any one individual, still, it is in the common interest of everyone that they exist. Samuelson and Nordhaus' snappy example is the lighthouse. Lighthouses save shiploads and human lives by warning about reefs and bottom-rocks, but no service fee can be collected from those who use them, because the users, due to the nature of the usage, avoid them as far as possible. These goods cannot be produced based on the market. Therefore, even in the purest market economy, there is always a segment to which the laws of market do not apply. And this segment is generally not small at all; it usually includes public education, or the police as well.

## Consumer surplus and producer surplus

It follows from the logic of free competition market that practically everybody gets practically everything cheaper than it would be just worth for him. And the same thing is true for the producers: most producers get a higher price for their products than it is worth for them to produce that particular product rather than something else. This may sound like far-fetched utopia, yet it is fully true.

If a product is scarce (and all of them are), then certain gains must be sacrificed in order to get it; and whoever makes the greatest sacrifice will get it. But this is true only if only one of the given commodity is available. If there are more than one, it is not worth making a big sacrifice for the first one. It is enough to get the last. However, this is true of all competitors. Thus, everybody gets the product for the same price, even if he, personally, would have been willing to pay more. Almost every copy of every commodity brings greater gain and greater consumer satisfaction than the price paid for it. As it is said, the majority of the consumers gain *consumer surplus*.

Consumer surplus comes from the fact that everybody finds something else that could easily substitute the given need for himself. In the desert, the first cup of water can save life, the second can give strength to go on, the third may save life tomorrow, the tenth may provide a little cleaning, and even the twentieth is pleasantly refreshing if we pour it over our nape. It is not really possible to substitute the first cup of water, but it is very much so with the twentieth. Some think that even the tenth can already be substituted quite well; for example, they can use a bucket of sifted sand for cleaning. The source of consumer surplus is that we are not alike.



The concept of consumer surplus has its counterpart on the supply side. Just as it is not the utility value that determines the prices for the consumers, it is not the expenses that determine them for the producers. If I can produce a product for cheaper than its price on the market, I can still sell it at its market price. The majority of the products are produced at a lower cost than the market price, since the market price expresses the expenses of that producer for whom it is still just worth producing the given product at the given cost. Whoever can produce it cheaper will receive more for his product than the gain he sacrificed in producing it. This producer will gain *producer surplus*.

The source of producer surplus is also the fact that we are not alike, therefore, everybody has different comparative advantages in production, and everybody is capable of innovation in different areas of the production. As life was made possible by the appearance of diversity, this is the basis of the development of economy as well. Economic value comes from the diversity of people.

Consumer surplus serves the well-being of people. They could not spend it on anything else, even if they wanted to. We are, however, free in deciding about the use of producer surplus. And it is often worth devoting it on the improvement of our well-being of tomorrow, and not of today.

If, for some reason, the thought that producer surplus, or at least part of it is not worth spending on immediate well-being becomes widespread, then producer surplus can begin to operate as capital. Capital makes the development of instruments that make later production more efficient possible. When this happens, the supply curve moves downward, as a result of which consumer surplus increases, while producer surplus does not decrease. The increase of consumer surplus causes this process to improve the general well-being of people. And as a result of the continuous presence of producer surplus, this whole process is continued at a larger scale.

## Needs Do Not Exist

We often hear psychologists speak about universal human needs. In general, they consider the only purpose of our psychological functions to be the satisfaction of needs. The Maslow's Pyramid is also called the hierarchy of needs; however, we shall refrain from using it in what follows. The term *need* suggests that it is something that must be satisfied, otherwise something bad will happen. Outside the realm of psychology, however, this is very rarely the issue; what is, though, is whether we should take more from one thing and less from another, or whether it is better to take less from one thing

and more from another. Such a question, though, is closer to the perspective of an economist than to that of a psychologist.

Economists had good reason to choose this approach. It became clear nearly two hundred years ago that for them the notion of need is too controversial. Let us go on with the example that demonstrated the notion of comparative advantages in Section 3. There we supposed that in the members of our mini-society A, B, and C have certain needs, as presented in the second and third columns of the table below. The fourth and fifth column shows how this mini-society is just able to produce all the goods needed by its members, also as seen in Section 3.

Individuals	Food needs	Clothing needs	Food production	Clothing production
A	1	4	4	2
B	2	2	-	3
C	1	1	-	2

For now, let us ignore whether these needs are reasonable or not, they might not even be fair, but this does not raise any problems, as the whole of society is able to produce for everyone's needs. Each individual, though, must exchange some of his or her products in order to satisfy those needs. What should the terms of trade be for the two products?

Let the terms of trade be 1 to  $c$ , assuming that in exchange for one unit of food we receive  $c$  units of clothes; we will then try to calculate a reasonable ratio, estimating exactly how much  $c$  should be. Let us look into the income each person gains from their production and the expenses they spend on satisfying their needs. In the fourth column, the prerequisites of a person being able to pay expenses from their income are shown, basically estimating what the result would be if we assumed  $\text{Income} \geq \text{Expenses}$ .

Individuals	Income (in units of clothing)	Expenses (in units of clothing)	Prerequisites of a positive balance
A	$4c+2$	$c+4$	$c \geq 2/3$
B	3	$2c+2$	$1/2 \geq c$
C	2	$c+1$	$1 \geq c$

The conditions of A and B show that there is no such value for  $c$  that could lead to a positive (or at least to a non-negative) balance for all three parties, as there is no number that is both higher than two thirds and lower than one half.

The sad part of this mathematical example is that it is almost always true: whether there are more product types or whether we consider a society with more than just three parties. If there were differences in the production capacity of individuals and their needs were not exactly equivalent to each other, then, aside from a few exceptions, Math would work like this. Normally there are no such terms of trade that can satisfy everyone, even if society were able to produce enough.

There are two ways to draw a conclusion from the above. Firstly, it can be said that the market itself is unfair and, regardless of the terms of trade, there will always remain someone who cannot satisfy

their needs, while others will gain more than what they need. Thus mathematics says that communism is the only fair way of life: everybody is to produce according to their own capacity and then shall receive a share from the produced goods that match their needs. Though nowhere has communism been implemented in its clear theoretical form; the vestigial attempts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century showed that it was unable to function. Therefore we will not discuss the principle problems of needs (what is to be considered as needs and what is not) for the time being.

Secondly, the main direction of economics has developed a very different world of thoughts and has not taken the notion of need into consideration. Needs do not actually exist, but wishes, desires, hopes and expectations do, all of which we try to satisfy, but we tend to substitute them if their costs are too high. Taking all this into consideration, a few ideas were born within the framework of economics, which would be worth incorporating into psychological thinking, as for instance the idea that the notion of “human needs” should be disregarded and replaced by the notion of “substitution effect”.

## The Science of Substitution Effect

From the economics perspective, we don't have needs; we have a propensity to substitute. Everyone is to decide for themselves what they are prone to substitute and what they are not prone to substitute with another item. It is purely our private decision, for which one does not have to account to anybody.

This is valid for both consumption and production. In the previous mathematical example, Y and Z would prefer to produce clothes, while X would prefer to produce food, but since the latter was able to produce more than the amount needed, he fell back on producing some clothes as well. Company directors regularly have to decide how much of each item they'll produce in the next period; this is a question of substitution effect, since they also decide on how much of each item not to produce. In their decision-making, they do not go solely for the profit, because in some cases a more promising, yet at the same time riskier option is substituted with a less promising, yet also less risky one, or the other way around.

The fact that you are reading just this Chapter now is also a result of many substitution effects. You could be reading any other book, or doing something completely different. And the fact that I wrote this is also a result of numerous substitution effects; I decided not to write a few other topics that were very close to me when I decided to write this one. As a result of this, those other topics only made it into an article, were postponed, or were completely substituted with this book.

According to the economist and Nobel Prize winner Gary Becker, what differentiates economics as a science from the other social sciences is not primarily in their subject matter, but in their approach. The approach of economics is based on two keystones. The first is that economics not only considers goods in the strictest economic sense, but also provides an integrated frame for the study of human behavior through the concept of substitution effect. The second is that it reduces all social phenomena to individual decisions. We will come back to the second later, but for the moment let us elaborate on the first. All goods can be substituted with another, at least to some extent. Economics is the science of substitution effects.

A counter-argument is, for instance, that one cannot survive without water; thus water cannot be substituted. Nonetheless, a great amount of water can be substituted with plumbers. It's true, they drink water too, but not as much as would have leaked out of the pipes had the plumbers not fixed them. Also, if we have a large fridge, we wouldn't cool our watermelon under running tap water in

the sink; this too can save a lot of water. When the price of water reaches a certain level, we are likely to relax concerning our fastidiousness about our car's cleanness and our lawn's verdure. Similarly, deodorants can also replace a lot of water. None of the above is perfect substitutes for water, but, if necessary, they would all serve to save large amounts of water. The scarcer the water as an economic commodity is, the more options people find to substitute it with; it is only a matter of necessity and innovativeness.

Prices serve to apportion scarce goods. In fact, all goods are scarce; if a product is available without constraints, it will no longer be considered an economic wealth. In certain areas, many parking lots are needed, while in others they're not as in demand. In areas in high demand, a parking lot is considered an economic wealth. But how does one know the value of a parking lot? Simple: parking fees discourage many people from driving their cars. People who aren't willing to pay will substitute the parking lot with something else, like with finding a place further away, with using public transportation or with eschewing their destination. The price is set too low if two drivers are willing to fight over a parking lot even after having paid for it. On the contrary, the price is too high if many parking lots are empty; the price is adequate when it is normally possible but not too easy to find an empty space. On the other hand, it is groundless to request payment for parking in an area where there are always many available parking lots.

This is not yet a purely human trait, as wolves also know this. If territory is a scarce commodity, they will urinate around it and try to do their best to protect it from intruders. It is a sacrifice on their behalf, as they could have used that energy for other useful things too. When a researcher (Mowat, 2001) got fed up with wolves attacking his tent night after night, he urinated around it, including the areas where he did his daily activities. Subsequently, the wolves no longer disturbed his territory during the nights; in fact, they were willing to take serious detours. Other researchers found that wolves living in areas with a lot of territory at their disposal do not waste their energy on urination. For those wolves, territory is not an economic commodity (Fredlund, 1975).

We usually express the value of economic goods in monetary terms, though what really matters is that we eschew something in order to obtain them. The reason why money is very suitable to present this principle is that it makes the fact very clear that, for the same amount of money, we could satisfy another of our wishes or desires. In economic terms, the cost of a commodity is not the money paid to obtain it, but it's those goods we didn't buy because of it. The price of a pizza is not \$10, but it's the bread and butter we didn't eat for lunch and the quarter of a CD we didn't buy, supposing that this is what we are most tempted to replace that specific pizza with. Replacing something else attains the other three quarters still missing from the CD's price. From an economic perspective, purchasing the pizza is irrelevant; what is relevant, though, is that we eschewed a quarter of a CD in order to get it.

In general, nothing follows the logic of "all or nothing"; the solution is almost always in between. We are ready to replace one part of our desires, hopes and wishes with something else, though we will always insist on obtaining a small fraction of them, even if they require major sacrifices. I would love to have caviar for breakfast every morning; and yet most of the time I substitute it with other things. But not always: a few times a year I decide to have caviar for breakfast, regardless of its cost. Maslow would say that until my needs on lower levels of the hierarchy are not satisfied, caviar won't be my real need and will only become one later. Yet when I decide on caviar, my other needs are not more or less satisfied than on other days. Thus decision-making is not a question of needs, but a question of feelings. Most of the time I feel that I am better off if I substitute the caviar; at other times, however, I feel it's worth choosing caviar over anything else.

## Economic Models

According to economists, all social phenomena emerge from the economic choices individuals make (Heyne 1999, Mérő, 1998). After having estimated and assessed expected utilities, costs and risks of all the available options, individuals choose the one with the greatest expected net outcome. Expected net outcome is the utility of the outcome of our choice minus the costs; that is to say that utilities eschew as a result of our choice – and risk can also be considered, namely the probability of obtaining the expected outcome of each option. The value of net outcome is subjective, they differ from individual to individual; but this is only a matter of detail for economists. It does not matter to them whether choices vary or not in the same decision-making situation between people, what matters only is that decisions are based on clear principles.

The previous paragraph may rightly elicit disagreement in non-economists. In fact, even economists take a long time to fully incorporate this way of thinking, but it's worth the effort, as this perspective proved to be extraordinary fruitful, though it might not always be generally valid. A psychologist or a sociologist can list a dozen social phenomena that definitely don't emerge from individual choices. An economist, however, sees all aspects of life through the lenses of his own profession (like e.g. Harford, 2009, or Levitt, Dubner, 2009, 2011), just as a psychologist looks for mental processes, or a mathematician searches for logic – sometimes with unexpected success, but often without any at all.

The economic approach does not assume that individuals are motivated solely by selfishness or material gain. Each individual regards different things as beneficial. For some, the greatest happiness of all is the happiness of others; naturally, these individuals will choose accordingly, and their value system will be represented in the calculations of the economist. More precisely, it is not specifically their value system that is represented, but the proportion of people with such a value system.

The assessment of utilities, costs and risks does not necessarily mean infallibility. In fact, it does not at all mean that people always know what is actually useful for them. The economic approach simply assumes that the acts of individuals are influenced by expected net benefits. For instance, more money is regarded more beneficial than less money (assuming that all other factors are equivalent).

This abstract assumption on the human decision-making mechanism undoubtedly leaves the numerous beautiful and interesting aspects of life out of economic theory. But physics does not speak of the romantic nature of how birds fly either. Instead, it describes gravity, buoyancy and inertia (none of which have to be learnt by the physical bodies because they all come naturally).

Physicists are not at all affected by critics who say that there are no bodies that don't have extent, but that do have mass. They will not be affected as long as the theory proves to be effective. They calculate with such bodies and employ their results in practice, and only when it's very necessary will they deface the clear theory by taking the bodies' extent, friction or drag into account.

Likewise, economists are not at all affected either when someone tries to criticize their theory by saying that the super-rational person they had assumed exists, in fact, does not. The economic concept of rationality is part of a *model* in the same way that the concept of spot-like body is in physics.

Economists also follow the beaten track in developing models in order to describe economy. They created models that successfully exclude idiosyncratic individual choices and emotions, namely the essence of psychology; they are replaced by statistical data.

These mathematical models of economics proved to be very efficient in giving technical support for financing a variety of innovations – here we primarily regard equilibrium models of pricing capital

assets (Bodie *et al*, 2008). They significantly contributed to the great boost of the global economy over the past decades, though there were always certain facts and theoretical doubts that questioned their validity. By 1998, after the collapse of LTCM, a financial giant founded by Nobel Prize winning economists, some of these models could no longer be sustained (for the full story see Dunbar, 2001). Stock market models had to be rethought. But credit risk models, which directly affected almost everyone, continued to have resounding success. The latter were only questioned during the economic crisis of 2008, but then thoroughly.

## Crisis of Models

Precisely as a result of the successful financial and economic models, the world had fundamentally changed by 2008. These previously well-functioning models began to give increasingly inaccurate descriptions of economic processes. Financial models, for instance, suggested that loans were goods that were quite scarce, whereas precisely because of the ever-evolving possibilities that these models provided, loan resources were constantly increasing. Models also suggested that the risk of the different financial constructions (investments, options and other transactions) could be easily estimated. However, due to the ever-growing intricacy and complexity of these constructions, their risks became less and less transparent and computable.

Every model has its own range of validity inside which it works well, but outside of which it loses its validity; this even applied to Newtonian mechanics. Economic models could never boast about such a wide range of validity, whereas Newtonian mechanics can; doubts and contradicting class of phenomena always emerged. If, however, a model is successfully employed in practice, doubts can be swept under the carpet by saying that there are always exceptions and by claiming the model to be essentially good.

We always have to go too far before we learn how far we can actually go. This happened before 2008 too, but as we didn't hit any snags until then, it was only during the crisis that we realized we had already gone too far.

Radically new economic models are required in the future; even if we are not exactly sure until what point the old ones remain valid. The new models should keep the most successful elements of the old ones, but at the same time be sufficiently innovative to be valid in today's world too.

The crisis of 2008 may have dissolved before new models had been developed and profoundly tested for their range of validity – even for the existing candidate models this process may take several more years. On the other hand, recovering from the crisis could be achieved merely by using common sense instead of witty scientific models. This will not bring back the rapid growth from before, since we had shut down its motor by cutting back on available loans for innovations. The setback, however, has stopped. In fact, growth can be attained again, though, to a lesser degree than in recent decades. If there is a development in the theories and models that have a range of validity that agrees with the current state of the world, then perhaps there will be a period of spectacular growth again.

A promising procedure to the development of new models is to incorporate as much psychological cognition as possible, even if this fundamentally contradicts classic economic models.

## Behavioral Economics

In economics, a new school of thought has recently evolved: *behavioral economics* (see for example Wilkinson 2008, Camerer *et al.* 2003, Akerlof, Shiller 2009, Brafman, Brafman 2008, Schwartz 2008, or as a great forerunner: Thaler, 1994) The starting point of this school was to keep the operating logic of old models, as well as the well-established mathematical and theoretical foundations, but also to incorporate, to the greatest extent possible, our psychological cognitions into the models' original presumptions. But, of course, it takes two to bargain: psychologists must provide very exact results in order to facilitate their integration into mathematical models, for example they should develop behavioral equations or a psychologically founded distortion functions.

The Israeli American psychologist and winner of the 2002 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, Daniel Kahneman, described systematic distortions in human risk perception that, according to a behavioral economic approach, proved to be adequate for direct integration into classic economic models (Tversky, Kahneman, 1988, 1992).

Since it has been revealed that thinking is inextricably entangled with emotions transmitted by somatic markers, economics can hardly remain the science of purely rational decisions. But it will still remain the science of substitution effects, except that economists must accept that it is mainly our somatic markers, namely our emotions that govern our choices of substitutions. It is also rational to count with the irrational nature of emotions and the behaviors they govern when making presumptions of models. This is the main objective of behavioral economics.

For a long time, Kahneman and his co-author Amos Tversky (who passed away in 1996 and so was unable to share the Nobel Prize) had not even suspected the interest their psychological research would elicit in economists. In the mid-1970s, Richard Thaler, a professor at the University of Chicago, convinced them to present their findings to a conference on economics; this was their first step toward the Nobel Prize. From that point on, the discipline of behavioral economics began to evolve and there is now substantial textbook material written on the topic. Disciples of Thaler and well-known followers of behavioral economics are George Loewenstein (Camerer *et al.*, 2003), and Dan Ariely, whose "credo" is also marked by the title of Ariely's first book *Predictably Irrational* (Ariely, 2008, 2010).

The precise reason behavioral economics turned out to be so successful is that it does not radically contradict the fundamentally rational economic approach. Its models are based on very strict mathematical foundations, just like classic models; the only difference is that its baseline hypotheses involve systematic and, for the mathematician, irrational operations (such as distortions) derived from psychological research.

If eventually behavioral economics won't produce really successful models, the fact that it revealed the role emotions play in economic behavior still remains its important achievement. After all, modern economy is just as much about human emotion as it is about material gain. Anyway, it is reasonable to radically eliminate the concept of 'human need' from psychology, too. We are just as able to substitute emotions that evoke such feelings of necessity with other emotions, as we are with our economic demands. And we do indeed perform substitutions at every turn without any guilty conscience in us.

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# Perceptions of the social system

Mihály Berkics

This chapter about the perceptions of the social system is intended for students of psychology. By the notion of *social system*, it refers to all the ingredients of a society – individuals, groups, institutions, and, most importantly, the relationships among them. Taking a psychological point of view, it concentrates on how people perceive the social system, and refrains from analyzing the social system *per se* – that would require a sociological, historical, and economic (and, perhaps, a philosophical) analysis of all the aforementioned actors and their relationships, while now only the perceptions of these will be discussed. Thus, for example, while a psychologist can think about, research and discuss people's *perceptions* of social justice, it would at least require a team of scholars from various disciplines to determine – if it is possible at all, and if we consider it to be a scientific question in the first place – whether a given social system is *actually* just. As this is an e-learning material intended for students, important social psychological processes of the perception of the social system will be reviewed with references not only to current, but also to some classical papers, and to some of the major textbooks on social psychology.

## Fairness: the cornerstone of the perception of social relations?

People have been living and surviving in groups ever since we can call them 'humans', but most probably (see EP) even our non-human ancestors adapted to their environments as social animals. Living and surviving in a group entails many things: cooperation as well as competition, the sharing of tasks (or the division of labor) and the sharing of the benefits (e.g. food, shelter), reciprocal altruism, a sort of 'mental accounting' regarding which group member helped which other in the past, which one is trustworthy and which one is likely to deceive others, forming coalitions within the group, to mention just a few important aspects of group survival. The notion of fairness – either as a conscious mental construct or as some mental structure the functioning of which becomes tangible in behavioral patterns – is a good candidate if we are looking for a set of processes that regulate a complex social environment.

Whether certain species of animals have a sense of fairness is still a topic where no consensus has been reached yet (see Brosnan, 2012; Brosnan and de Waal, 2012; but see also the informative and entertaining TED talk by de Waal, 2011), but we know that humans do have it and that the sense of fairness is an important factor in perceiving the social world and regulating social behavior, from competition (Tjosvold, 2003) to attributions (e.g. Lerner, 1980) to personal relationships (e.g. Deutsch, 2000) to perceptions of the general social system and political ideologies (e.g. Jost and Banaji, 1994). An evolutionary theory, the so-called social brain hypothesis (Dunbar, 2007) holds that even the relatively large neocortex found in primates (among them, of course, humans) is a consequence of group survival. During their evolution, these species adapted to be able to navigate in a complex social environment where belonging to the group and cooperating with others is necessary for survival, but it is also necessary to be able to cope with the presence of within-group rivalry and deception.

Since we, humans too, are 'social animals', can a sense of, or a sensitivity to fairness be an evolutionary heritage of humankind? Consider the following simple task (Cosmides and Tooby, 1992).

You see a set of four cards before you on the table. You know that each card has a letter on one side, and a number on the other. Of course, you only see one side of each card lying before you, and you see two letters and two numbers: an A, an S, a 3 and an 8. There are numbers on the back side of the first two, and letters on the back side of the last two – but you cannot see them. Your task is to make sure if the following hypothesis is true for this set of four cards: 'If there is a vowel on one side of a card, then there is an even number on the other side'. Moreover, you have to test this hypothesis by turning the least possible number of these four cards. If you think it is enough to turn one of them, then you should not turn the others – just answer: which one? Of course, you may also think that it is absolutely necessary to turn two, or three, or all four cards to test the hypothesis. Try to solve this problem before you continue reading.

Before the solution is revealed, try another one. Imagine that you are the chief of a hunter-gatherer tribe. There is a rule which all people in the tribe must observe: 'Only those people may eat a cassava root, who have a tattoo on their back.' As the chief, it is your job that the rule not be broken. You see four people of your tribe: 1) the first is standing with his face towards you, and he is eating a cassava root (but you cannot see his back); 2) the second one shows his back to you, and you see he has a tattoo on it (but you cannot see what he is eating); 3) you see the third one eating meat (but you cannot see his back); and 4) the fourth one is standing with his back towards you, and you see he has no tattoo on it (and you cannot see what he is eating). Your task is to check upon the minimum number of these four people (you do not want to disturb anyone unnecessarily) to see whether any of them is about to violate your tribe's rule. Which one(s) would you check upon?

The second one should be relatively easy. Of course you should check upon the one eating a cassava root (to see if he has the tattoo), and the one without the tattoo (to see if he is eating a cassava root). Indeed, most people solve this puzzle correctly (Cosmides and Tooby, 1992). But what about the first one? If you solve that problem like a relative majority of people do, then you will select cards 'A' and '8'. Wrong. The card with an A has indeed to be turned (to see if there is indeed an even number on the back side), but the card with an 8 should not. The hypothesis was 'IF vowel THEN even number', not the other way around. And nothing was said about consonants. Thus, if there is a vowel on the other side of the '8', then the hypothesis is supported, and if there is a consonant there, that does not prove it wrong either. You cannot gain information about the hypothesis by turning the card with an 8. Instead of '8', you should turn '3' – if there is a vowel on the other side, then the hypothesis is clearly false.

Why do such tasks matter in relation to the perception of fairness? First of all, note that the two tasks have an identical underlying logical structure: in both cases a rule should be tested that says 'if A then B'. In the first task, 'A' is the fact that a consonant is on one side, while 'B' is the fact that an even number is on the other. In the second task, 'A' is the fact that a member of the tribe is eating a cassava root, while 'B' is the fact that he should have a tattoo on his back. However, even if the two tasks are logically isomorphic, many studies have shown that people consistently solve those ones better which refer to some social rule, norm, or agreement – thus, it seems like the human mind is not like a general purpose computer, but a set of domain specific modules (see Cosmides and Tooby, 1992). If our minds were general purpose computers, we would be equally good in solving these tasks, no matter what the context. Since, however, we are better at solving tasks that pertain to social rules, norms, and agreements, it seems we have a module specifically attuned to these contexts. Our sense of fairness may be an evolutionary adaptation, which regulates social relationships and help us navigate in the complex environment of these relationships.

Another type of evidence for the innate, adaptational nature of the sense of fairness comes from experiments with well-known resource allocation games like the Prisoner's Dilemma Game (PDG) and the Public Goods Game (PGG). In the PDG, two players have to decide independently if they want to cooperate or defect. If both cooperate, both get a small reward. If both defect, both suffer a slight loss. If, however, one cooperates and the other defects, the defector gets a big bonus and the cooperative player suffers a big loss. That is, for any of the two players, the most rewarding case is if s/he defects and the other cooperates; the next best is when both cooperate; the next is when both defect; and the worst scenario is when the player cooperates but the other defects.

It is quite clear, then, that the temptation to defect is strong. Even if it would be nice to cooperate, one can never know if the other player will do that, too. Therefore, by defection one may cut his/her losses – or gain big if the other player cooperates. And people do defect a lot of times. Still, when they are merely observing such a game, and they can punish a defector, they frequently do it, even if they have to pay for the punishment (a sum is deducted from their reward for taking part in the study), and even if they have no material interest in punishing the defector. Moreover, as brain imaging techniques have shown, punishing a defector might be a source of enjoyment, an action that is rewarding in itself (see de Quervain et al, 2004).

In the PGG, several players have to decide how many of their tokens (which can be exchanged for money at the end of the experiment) they want to 'invest' in a common enterprise. The experimenter then increases the invested tokens by a certain factor (e.g. doubles them), and distributes the increased sum evenly across all participants. Defection in this context means that a player does not invest at all, but still receives his/her share of the reward at the end of the turn. If this game is played over several turns, the normal outcome is that players virtually stop investing after a few turns. Why invest if the free-riders benefit from the spoils? However, cooperation can be restored with a simple measure: punishment. Any player who sees that another is not cooperating may 'punish' the defector by telling the experimenter that a certain number of his/her tokens shall be taken away. Punishment, as in real life, is costly, however: the punishing player must himself pay a fraction of the deducted tokens, too. If punishment is introduced, cooperation is restored quickly, as defectors quickly realize that free-riding is not paying off any more.

Note that punishment in this context is altruistic behavior (they do call it 'altruistic punishment': see de Quervain et al, 2004). Rational self-interest would dictate that the player do not punish but wait for others to do it, and then enjoy the benefits of restored cooperation. Nevertheless, there are always players who do punish, and just like in the case of observing a PDG, punishment here, too, seems to be an act that is rewarding in itself. Thus, it seems like we, humans have a sense of fairness which regulates group life and governs individual behavior even contrary to short-term self-interest.

## Types of justice

The sense of fairness or justice is broadly categorized by researchers into three to five domains (see Tyler and Smith, 1998; Kay and Jost, 2010). Traditionally, three concerns were mentioned: distributive, procedural, and retributive justice. Lately, interactional and restorative justice have been added to the list (see the difference between the two handbook chapters cited above).

## Distributive justice

Distributive justice, as the name suggests, concerns the distribution of rewards (material or social) among a group of people. Basically, it is about 'who deserves what'. Three major principles have been identified to govern people's sense of distributive fairness: equity, equality, and need. Equity is the principle that rewards should be allocated in a meritocratic way: people's outcomes should be proportional to their inputs (Tyler and Smith, 1998). Thus, the output/input quotient should be the same for all concerned. Indeed, it has been shown that when this principle is violated, people tend to feel bad about it and be motivated to amend the situation. This 'meritocratic' view of fairness is, however, not without limitations. Human beings do not always behave as the homo oeconomicus (as we have already seen in the previous section), rationally calculating the amount of inputs and outputs, and sometimes they would find this to be socially inadequate – e.g. asking for the bill after a family dinner, or in some cases, offering or asking payment for doing a favor. It may also be a question what may be accounted as 'input' (e.g. rank? position? need?), stretching the limits of equity theory.

Another distributive principle is equality: rewards or the output should simply be split equally across the people concerned. This may be in complete harmony with the equity principle when the inputs of all concerned are equal – however, there will be a conflict when there are sizable differences between people's inputs. While individualism would imply a distribution based on equity, our evolutionary heritage seems to include a preference for equality as well. Many hunter-gatherer societies prefer an equal or close to equal distribution of material rewards, while inequality is restricted to things such as prestige or mating. Hunters not sharing as much of their spoils are less respected and are less likely to receive help when they need it. Individuals trying to accumulate material wealth are punished by other tribe members, e.g. their property stolen or destroyed (see Boehm, 1999).

A third principle – need – further complicates the question of fair distribution: this principle dictates that members of a group shall be rewarded according to their needs, e.g. somebody having to support a family or being in a dire economic situation should get more for the same input than those who are better off. This principle may be in conflict both with equity and equality. When these principles are in conflict, which one is likely to be followed? It depends on the context. The theory of relational models by A.P. Fiske (1992) identifies four types of contexts or relational models that govern, among other things, the sharing of rewards among the individuals concerned. People may construct different social relationships – and even different aspects or domains of the same social relationship – according to different relational models. These models are broader concepts than to be only about distribution, but they have strong implications to distributive justice principles as well.

In Market Pricing (MP) relationships, people (or groups, because the units engaging in such relationships may be groups as well) calculate their investments and returns, the costs and the benefits, the price (not necessarily in money) of what they give and what they receive. In distributive fairness terms, this relational model corresponds to the principle of equity. Authority Ranking (AR) relationships, besides regulating within-group activities and supporting systems of social hierarchy, also imply directives to distributive fairness. This relational model, too, can be linked with the equity principle, but with a twist: rewards are distributed proportionally, but rank or authority is also accounted as an 'input'. In Equality Matching (EM) relationships people try to maintain equality, not only in the distribution of rewards, but with regard to distributive fairness, the equality principle is a clear match to these kind of relationships. Finally, in Communal Sharing (CS) relationships people treat all concerned as an undifferentiated group or unit where everyone's well-being is everyone's

concern. In such relationships (e.g. in a romantic couple deeply in love, or in a family) no accounting of inputs or outputs, and no calculations to determine equality are performed, but the individuals concerned will engage in such a distribution that maximizes the well-being of their community as a whole – in distributive fairness terms, this is the principle of need at work. Of course, different aspects of the same social relationship may be constructed according to different relational models. E.g. in a family all four models may be present: MP may govern how the parents share family expenditures and how the kids are rewarded for academic performance; AR may dictate that the kids have to obey the parents in certain contexts; EM may regulate how gifts are presented to the kids (if neither should receive significantly more than the other); and CS may be at work when one of the children gets a pair of new shoes because s/he needs it (and the other does not).

## Procedural justice

A second concern that is implied by people's sense of fairness is called procedural justice (Tyler and Smith, 1998; Kay and Jost, 2010). While distributive justice concerns the outcomes, procedural justice concerns the road that leads to them. To put it in a specific context, let us consider a work team being engaged in a joint project. Distributive justice concerns how the rewards shall be allocated among the team members when the project is successfully finished. Procedural justice concerns the processes through which that allocation is completed, e.g. how the rules of distribution are negotiated, how performance is measured, and how much say each of the participants have in shaping the context in which the outcomes are determined. A decision may, objectively speaking, be fair from a distributive point of view (e.g. a performance-based reward allocation), yet felt to be lacking in fairness by those concerned from a procedural point of view (e.g. if the rules and the measurement, even if they were 'correct' from a meritocratic aspect, were not transparent, or if the people concerned had no say in how the rewards will be allocated).

Studies have shown, that people may find procedural justice even more important than distributive justice (see Tyler and Smith, 1998; Kay and Jost, 2010), for several reasons. First, they may be driven by the core social motive of control (see Fiske, 2004), making them want to have an influence over how the rewards are allocated or the decisions made. Second, they may be driven by the core social motive of self-enhancement (Fiske, 2004), making them sensitive to what implications the procedure has about the self. Transparent and inclusive contexts send the participant a much more positive message about his/her reputation and self-worth than do such contexts where a decision is simply made without involving those concerned. Third, people may also be driven by the core social motive of understanding (Fiske, 2004), making them want to know how the decision is made and give them information that can be used to social comparison (see the overview provided by Kay and Jost, 2010).

## Retributive justice

Retributive justice is an aspect of the sense of fairness that concerns the consequences of the violation of social norms: what the appropriate punishment is for a given transgression. Moral philosophers have since long thought about the justifications for punishment, and they have offered two kinds of these. The utilitarian approach holds that punishment should serve the greater good of the society, either by incapacitating offenders or by deterring potential offenders to do harm. The other suggestion is not concerned about the future, but about rectifying the moral wrong and restoring justice by giving offenders the punishment they deserve (Carlsmith and Darley, 2008). While both approaches might seem to be reasonable, empirical evidence shows that people are not

motivated by utilitarian concerns when they form their attitudes and make judgments about retribution, but they simply follow a 'just deserts' approach, thinking that each offender should get what s/he deserves (see a comprehensive review by Carlsmith and Darley, 2008).

Judgments of offenses tend to be formed via quick, intuitive mechanisms. However, more deliberate, reasoning-based processes can also be activated (Carlsmith and Darley, 2008), making retributive justice judgments part of a dual-process mechanism the operation of which can be observed across many domains in social psychology, from attributions to impression formation to stereotyping and processing persuasive messages (see also the well-known 'superficiality versus depth' processing principle by Smith and Mackie, 2007). However, even the slower, more deliberative judgments tend to follow the 'just deserts' principle.

This phenomenon may cause a serious problem in modern societies. As the criminal policies and penal systems of many highly developed societies tend to become more utilitarian, the punitive principles governing the penal system will diverge from the moral intuitions of the citizenry, causing dissatisfaction with and distrust towards legislative and government institutions when the public is confronted with cases where a law, a decision or a judgment is not what the common citizen would expect (Carlsmith and Darley, 2008). This may also contribute to a phenomenon known as 'penal populism' (Pratt, 2007): that in several countries the public is demanding a tougher criminal policy and harsher sentences for offenders.

Note, however, that one of the first authors to write extensively on this phenomenon, John Pratt (2007) suggested that penal populism may be caused by the continuous decline of the welfare state and the increasing insecurity and uncertainty of experienced by people in modern societies and economies since the 1970s. It should also be mentioned, that, even if the public at first supports harsh retributive policies (e.g. the three-strikes law introduced in California), they are willing to correct their previous judgments when confronted with unforeseen and undesired consequences of these, e.g. somebody receiving severe punishment for a minor offence (see Carlsmith and Darley, 2008). No matter what the exact pattern of causality is (we may also include personality factors and ideology), penal populism is a notion that should be reckoned with in the contemporary social context of retributive justice judgments.

## Other justice concerns

Besides the three justice concerns mentioned above and being traditionally part of the literature on the psychology of social justice (see e.g. Tyler and Smith, 1998), two other aspects of fairness: interactional and restorative justice have also made it into the professional discourse, as testified by the latest (2010) edition of the Handbook of Social Psychology (Jost and Kay, 2010). Interactional or informal justice means that people are treated with respect and dignity. There is some overlap with procedural justice, and indeed there is some disagreement among researchers whether to treat these two as separate justice concerns (Jost and Kay, 2010). However, while procedural justice is more about the formal and structural aspects of the decision-making mechanism, interactional justice is the way these rules are implemented in personal interactions. One may also wonder, though, whether interactional justice can be treated as a special case of distributive justice – if we consider dignity and respect as immaterial 'goods' that can be allocated to people just as well as material ones.

Restorative justice is another newly coined term for another justice concern, meant to replace or at least complement the notion of retributive justice (Jost and Kay, 2010; see also Okimoto et al, 2009).

Restorative justice is the notion that, instead of punishment, offenders could be treated by making them repair the harm done, after bringing them together with the victims to discuss the case and reach a deal that can bring about the restoration of justice, admission of guilt, forgiveness, and reconciliation. This notion of justice has been suggested by practitioners rather than academic researchers (Jost and Kay, 2010), and seems to imply a political agenda to change an overwhelmingly punishment-oriented penal system to a more community-oriented and socially integrative one (cf. Carlsmith and Darley, 2008).

It is, however, doubtful if such a policy agenda can be successful with all kinds of offenses with a public whose retributive judgments are primarily driven by 'just deserts' concerns, and which may react to any changes perceived to be lenient with another surge of penal populism. Indeed, while Okimoto et al (2009) have shown that restorative sentencing was regarded as fairer than retributive across a set of scenarios (a frequently used method to study retributive judgments), the scenarios described relatively minor offenses and the fairness ratings of restorative practices were highest when the involved parties had a shared identity. Another scenario-based study by Gromet and Darley (2006) has shown that as the magnitude of the offense increases, the preference for restorative practices over retributive ones drops dramatically.

## Stereotyping: an important social cognitive aspect of the perception of the social system

The perception of the social system involves a plethora of social cognitive processes from attributions (e.g. of poverty and crime) to impression formation to group perception to individual differences in thinking styles (and the motivational and personality factors behind them) – an entire book may not be enough to present all the theory and research done in this area (see e.g. Jost et al, 2003). In this chapter, we focus on stereotyping as a 'quick and dirty' tool (see Fiske et al, 2006) to represent the social world.

Stereotypes are simplified, trait-based representations of a social group. Perhaps the most frequently studied stereotypes were the ones regarding national and ethnic groups, but humans may – and do – have stereotypes about all kinds of social groups: social classes, occupations or professions, religious groups, and even the two genders – any group of people who share some characteristics which either they or others consider to be socially meaningful (Smith and Mackie, 2007). Researchers have been wondering for a lot of time whether stereotypes have a 'grain of truth' or are only so much biased representations of the social world that they have hardly any connection to social reality whatsoever. One of the earliest studies on stereotyping by Katz and Braly (1933) has, for example, concluded that stereotypes are learned from one's socio-cultural environment, and thus people may have stereotypes even about groups whose members they never encountered personally. Other early approaches like those of Adorno et al (1950) tried to identify personality factors and problems behind stereotyping, for example an authoritarian parenting style that results in a rigid and prejudiced way of thinking.

The cognitive approach to stereotyping emphasizes the basic cognitive process of categorization (Fiske, 2004; Fiske et al, 2006). Just as people sort the objects in their physical environment into meaningful categories to cope with the huge amount of information they are exposed to, they do the same with people (not only with others, but also with themselves), and represent them in social categories. A lot of studies have been done on such processes, e.g. on the illusory correlation or on what characteristics make a group to be a meaningful entity in the eye of the beholder (see Fiske's,

2004 overview). Yet, this approach still does not say much about whether, and if yes, how stereotypes are connected to actual social realities.

Stereotypes may actually reflect important aspects of the social world – especially such that they are an essential part of the perception of the social system. While there is indeed a lot of bias in stereotypes, they can be based on the actual status of and relationships between the social groups they represent (Hunyady, 2004). For example, social roles have been shown to trigger what social psychologists call correspondence biases – attributions that hypothesize corresponding traits behind actions (see Smith and Mackie, 2007). If, for example, people typically encounter members of a social group in only a limited set of social roles (e.g. women as caregivers, Jews as merchants, immigrants in low prestige jobs), then they tend to attribute them traits that correspond to their roles (e.g. warm, shrewd, dumb). Relationships between groups also affect stereotypes. Members of nations that are at war with each other tend to have rather hostile stereotypes about the other party – however, if the two nations become allies after the war (like Japan and /West/ Germany with the USA in the decades following World War Two), these stereotypes will, if slowly, change for a more positive outlook (Smith and Mackie, 2007).

Perhaps the best known model of stereotyping that accounts for these aspects is the stereotype content model by Susan Fiske (see e.g. Fiske et al, 2002). Supported by a body of empirical research, the model holds that people use two basic dimensions to categorize groups: warmth and competence. The model also has an evolutionary flavor, as the author holds that these two dimensions are based on the two kinds of information about another group (or individual, for that matter) which may be the most important for survival: whether the other party is hostile towards us or is a potential ally (warmth), and whether they are competent enough to carry out their intentions. In modern societies, perceptions in the warmth dimension are driven by the competitive or cooperative relationship between the ingroup and the perceived outgroup, while the perceived competence is driven by the status of the perceived group (higher-status groups being perceived as more competent – Fiske et al, 2002).

Thus, various stereotypes themselves 'do not stand on their own but rather are components of some kind of a system' (Hunyady, 2004:189). A stereotype of a given group has not all its meaning in itself, but it also conveys information when it is compared and related to other stereotypes. Thus, stereotypes about nations can form a mental 'map of the world' (Hunyady, 2004), while stereotypes about social classes and occupations can also be considered a mental representation of a social system.

## Motivational factors in the perceptions of the social system

There are some motivational factors documented by now classical research which form an essential part of any review of the perceptions of the social system: social identity, social comparison (and relative deprivation), and the so-called belief in a just world – all of which, in some way, contribute to the individual's self-worth or sense of security by introducing potential biases into the way people see society around them.

### Social identity

Besides having an individual self and sense of identity, people also have a *social identity* which means that their memberships held in various groups are also part of their selves (see Tajfel and Turner,

1979). Since being a member of a certain group is part of the person's self, and since people are in general motivated to have a positive self-image (*cf.* the core social motive of self-enhancement – Fiske, 2004), they will tend to value their ingroups higher. A social group is not an entity to be perceived on its own, but one that is perceived in relation to similar entities, i.e. other social groups. Thus, the enhancement of one's own group typically means comparing the ingroup to outgroups and evaluating it favorably relative to those (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

This is relatively easily done by members of high-status groups, but can be a difficult task for a member of such a group that is low in status, poor, lacking in opportunities, and scorned by others. Members of such groups therefore have different ways to cope with low group status: they may emphasize the group's qualities in domains unrelated to socio-economic success, or may quit the group as well (see Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

## Social comparison and relative deprivation

During World War Two, an American psychologist studying and working with soldiers noted a curious phenomenon about how satisfied people serving in various branches of the army were with promotions and decorations. Pilots, who had a lot of opportunities to excel in combat and be promoted or decorated were dissatisfied relatively to officers in another, less glamorous branch, where promotions and decorations were much less frequent: artillery (Stouffer et al, 1949). While at first this finding may be puzzling, there is an entirely logical explanation to it: satisfaction is not just determined by how much reward one gets objectively, but how much compared to his/her expectations. These expectations are very often based on what other, similar people seem to have.

Social comparison (Festinger, 1954) is the process by which people evaluate their abilities, opinions (or rewards, or their lot in general) relative to similar others. Similarity is an important aspect, because comparing oneself to a similar other may convey the most information about the self (no amateur chess player would gain much knowledge by comparing themselves to the world champion, and no middle-class guy would be able to judge their salaries better by comparing it to the income of a billionaire or to that of a starving homeless person). Most of the time, people employ downward comparison, that is, they compare their abilities or their lot to those slightly below them – slightly, because that still conveys a reasonable amount of information, and below, because that enables them to maintain a positive self-evaluation (Festinger, 1954).

In Stouffer et al's (1949) case with the satisfied artillerymen and the complaining pilots, the explanation is that people in both branches compared themselves to their fellow officers in the same branch. Even though pilots got much more promotions and decorations, their fellow pilots got them, too – and, since opportunities for reward seemed abundant, people expected them, too. Artillery officers, on the other hand, were more satisfied despite a relative lack of such rewards that were poured on their air force comrades – as promotions did not come often, they were not expected so intensely, either.

Thus, the way people perceive the social system and their place in it also depends on whom or what they compares themselves or their lot to. As we have seen, members of low-status or disadvantaged groups may ameliorate their bad feelings by comparing themselves to fellow group members only. Large and visible inequity or inequality, however, especially if there is no reasonable explanation to it, may give rise to dissatisfaction (see e.g. van der Toorn et al, 2010).

Comparison can, of course, be made across time as well. People may compare their current status and wealth to those in previous times or to their expectations about the future. Even members of low-

status groups may be satisfied with their lot if they perceive an upward tendency. Historical research has shown that revolts tend to occur not when the situation is the most desperate, but when after a period of improvement is followed by a reversal (Davies, 1962).

## The belief in a just world (or the justice motive)

When people perceive injustice, however, it is not just their behavior that might be changed to restore a just world, but their perceptions as well. They may simply fail to recognize injustice, or they may explain it away by using attributions that blame the victim for his/her misfortune. This is what social psychologists call the belief in a just world (Lerner, 1980). It is much more comfortable and secure to live in a world where people get what they deserve and deserve what they get. If the perceiver – as the majority of the people – has a positive self-image, then s/he can rest assured that rewards await him/her in the future. If you feel you are a good person, and if good people get rewards, then you do not have to be anxious about terrible things that may happen to you. The belief in a just world, is therefore, an effective defense mechanism (Lerner, 1980).

Just world beliefs, however, may not only be seen as biases that protect us from anxiety by blaming innocent and unfortunate victims, as researchers tended to view this concept for decades. More recent approaches pioneered by Claudia Dalbert have effectively 'rehabilitated' (Furnham, 2004) the belief in a just world as a motive that works the other way around as well: that is, not only do people expect rewards in a just world for their already existing positive self-image, but they will also be motivated to actually do good things to attain those rewards. This way, the belief in a just world becomes a 'personal contract' (Dalbert et al, 2001): the individual accepts that s/he has to do good in order to get what s/he wants. This concept of just world beliefs makes it possible to formulate hypotheses concerning the socially positive consequences of this phenomenon. Indeed, just world beliefs have been shown to reduce distress at school (Dalbert and Stoeber, 2005), contributes to coping, motivation, achievement, and subjective well-being (Dalbert, 2004).

## System justification theory

System justification theory is one of today's most important and most frequently cited theories when it comes to the perception of the social system. System justification theory (Jost and Banaji, 1994; Jost et al, 2004) holds that people are motivated to justify existing social, political, and economic conditions. The theory partly relates itself to just world beliefs but is more than a mere extension of Lerner's (1980) work. Besides to maintain an image about a world where everyone gets what they deserve, people may also be motivated to justify the system because of adherence to social norms, or being influenced by social institutions and ideologies (Jost et al, 2004).

Since people are motivated to see the world as just in the first place, they are also motivated to see existing social, political, and economic conditions as fair and justifiable (Jost and Hunyady, 2002). This motivation can further be strengthened by personality factors like the need for order and structure or political conservatism (Jost et al, 2003), and an acquisition of ideological views by social learning. The competition-based, capitalist market economy prevalent in highly developed Western countries is, for example, quite often justified by the meritocratic ideology of individual effort and the free market (Jost and Hunyady, 2005; McCoy and Major, 2006). System justification can also be conceived as an instance of the reduction of cognitive dissonance. Whenever the perception of social inequality becomes dissonant with expectations regarding equality (cf. Section 1), the perceiver can reduce this dissonance by explaining the perceived inequality as fair and just (Jost et al, 2002).

System justification theory has been tested in a number of countries from the USA to the UK to Italy to Israel to Poland, and even in Hungary (see Jost et al, 2004; see also Van der Toorn et al, 2010), in both questionnaire surveys and experimental designs. Experimental studies revealed, for example, that people tend to justify group differences in outcomes no matter what the direction of those differences is and how the (false) impression of those differences was created (Jost, 2001). It was also shown that low status groups tend to justify the system, too, even contrary to their own (alleged) interests, making the researchers talk about the formation of a 'false consciousness' (Jost and Banaji, 1994). It was also confirmed by survey data that members of disadvantaged groups tended to rationalize inequalities (that were detrimental to them) as being fair and just, a finding that contradicts the predictions of Social Identity Theory (Jost and Burgess, 2001; Jost et al, 2002, 2004). The power of system justification is so strong that it may even override self-enhancing concerns of valuing the ingroup. (Note, however, that members of low-status groups can also value their groups on status-irrelevant trait dimensions, or may counteridentify with the group – cf. Section 4.1.) It is also strong enough to make people justify conditions in advance, due to the mere anticipation of them (e.g. the anticipated outcome of presidential elections – Kay et al, 2007).

Stereotyping is a powerful tool to justify the social system. If we consider individual stereotypes as part of a system representing the social world, then the various traits assigned to various groups also help explain – and rationalize and justify – the places those groups occupy in the social system (see Jost and Banaji, 1994; cf. Hunyady, 2004). For example, if a high-status group is ascribed positive traits in the competence dimension (e.g. smart, hard-working), while the perceivers attribute unfavorable traits to a low-status group in the same dimension (e.g. dumb, lazy), then it is not only about two different stereotypes about two different groups, but also a rationalization of the status difference between them. We should note that these stereotypes – or elements of stereotypes – also serve of attributions explaining why members of one group tend to be more successful than those of the other. Such views in a larger quantity and organized into a coherent and meaningful pattern may form a social ideology. Actually, several studies investigating system justification used stereotypical ratings of various groups as dependent variables (Jost et al, 2004).

Perceivers may also 'compensate' the lower status group with positive characteristics in the 'warmth' dimension. While this 'compensation' seems to work against system justification, it can actually enhance the perceived legitimacy of the system by allocating warmth-related 'rewards' where society fails to allocate more material ones (Kay and Jost, 2003). In a series of studies, participants were primed with exemplars being either high or low in the competence and the warmth dimensions of social perception (Kay and Jost, 2003; Kay et al, 2005, 2007). After some filler tasks, their levels of system justification were assessed. It was found that the highest levels of system justification were expressed by those who were primed with 'complementary' stereotypes – that is, the exemplar was high in one dimension, but low in the other. It seems people are more willing to accept status inequalities if these are somehow 'compensated for' in the social-moral dimension of 'warmth'. Such results were obtained with survey methods lacking a manipulated independent variable (Jost et al, 2005), and with implicit measures as well (Kay et al, 2007).

Another important thesis of system justification theory says that it is quite often the disadvantaged groups that tend to justify the system, contrary to what prior theories (e.g. Social Identity Theory) say about ingroup favoritism in social cognition (Jost, 2000). Researchers of system justification conducted a number of studies supporting the existence of outgroup favoritism (e.g. Jost, 2001; Jost et al, 2002; Jost and Hunyady, 2005; McCoy and Major, 2006). That low-status groups tend to favor outgroups is not some group-specific or idiosyncratic phenomenon, but the consequence of these groups acquiring system-justifying beliefs and ideologies, the result being that the stereotypes held

by them will be the same ones held by high-status groups and by society in general (Jost et al, 2004; cf. Hunyady, 2004).

## The theory of social dominance

The theory of social dominance (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999) is partially overlapping with system justification theory, but broader in scope. This theory holds that oppression, inequality and discrimination against low-status groups is an inevitable consequence of how human societies are organized. (Inevitable, but not justifiable, as the authors are eager to emphasize in the last chapter of their book.) Sidanius and Pratto (1999) did and/or cited a large number of studies showing that group-based (e.g. ethnic or sexual) discrimination is prevalent even in the most democratic Western European and North American societies. That oppression is inevitable, they deduce from evolutionary considerations: in the past, the most successful groups in the competition for scarce resources were those that had a strict hierarchical structure, and oppressed the groups they conquered. Of course, this theory has implications for the perception of social justice as well.

Sidanius and Pratto (1999) hold that oppression is a 'cooperative game': subjugated groups are just as part of the game as the dominant ones oppressing them. This is not only true to perceptions of inequality, but also to the behaviors related to it. Members of low-status groups are provided much less of the resources needed for success, but they also tend to contribute to their low status by self-defeating behavior, e.g. dropping out of school, substance abuse, etc.

Perceptions of the social system are also influenced by the social hierarchy. By having a monopoly over education and intellectual life, dominant groups can control what ideological beliefs are accepted in society (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999; Sidanius et al, 2004). Theoreticians of social dominance call these beliefs 'legitimizing myths'. The word 'myth' refers to the fact that these are beliefs which are never checked for their truth, either because it is not possible or because people do not wish to do it. How, for example, could a layperson check if it is indeed true that 'success in this society depends on abilities and hard work'? And why would one *want* to check it when one has made up his/her mind about it long before? Here we have a 'legitimizing myth' (more specifically, a hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing myth), which, if accepted as true, leads to acceptance of existing social conditions as well – hardly anyone would question the position of successful people if they achieved their status with their abilities and hard work. This may run contrary to the perceiver's (alleged) self-interest, and for such cases Sidanius and Pratto (1999) use the term 'false consciousness' just as Jost and his colleagues (e.g. Jost and Banaji, 1994) did.

Legitimizing myths may, however, be hierarchy-attenuating as well (as Sidanius and Pratto, 1999 call them), when they convey messages that question the legitimacy of the overarching social, political, and economic system. These are also 'myths' in the same sense of the word as we have just seen: they may be true or be false, or, most probably, nearly impossible to test or falsify, but, actually, nobody cares to try that anyway. (E.g. a hierarchy-attenuating myth could be: 'rich and powerful people oppress and exploit the poor'.)

The theories of system justification and social dominance, as the reader now can see, have a lot in common about systemic perceptions. They do have their differences (e.g. see Jost et al, 2004 and Sidanius et al, 2004), especially that social dominance theory puts more emphasis on the actual social structure, while system justification theory focuses more on individual-level cognitive and motivational processes. However, regarding how people perceive the social system, they share a

fundamental thesis: that many more people are motivated to see the system as fair and just than what would be expected based on these people's (alleged) interests.

## Conclusion

The perception of the social system is not a single and simple phenomenon. It involves many different psychological processes, from the most basic processes in social perception (e.g. attribution) to complex, supra-individual level phenomena like social dominance and legitimizing myths. For the student of such perceptions thence it is necessary to know all the theories and research pertaining to these processes. Sometimes the different approaches may be at an odds regarding general models but specific predictions as well. For example, when people are confronted with criminal policy practices contrary to their retributive intuitions, will system justification prevail or will the perceived discrepancy between what they think is right and what they see the system is practicing undermine their trust in policies and institutions, i.e. the system? What about system justification in countries where the system has recently been transformed or is in transition (Van der Toorn et al, 2010)? There are many questions yet to be answered, and several disagreements between theories to be resolved. There is, however, an aspect common to all the different approaches: no matter whether we talk about evolutionary sensitivities to norms, rules, and equality, or about the various aspects of justice, or just world beliefs, or justifying or legitimizing the system, humans seem to strive for fairness, even if not for genuine fairness – if such a thing exists – but the perception of fairness. With more or less success, human beings constantly try to rationalize the social conditions they live in, and these rationalizations about fairness and justice are the key aspects of the perceptions of the social system.

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# Social identification and social representations<sup>1</sup>

Paszkał Kiss

The theoretical approaches in the title represent distinct social psychological paradigms (Breakwell, 1993, 2001). There are many intersections between their lines of thought, still they may not be put together without the careful analysis of their different epistemological grounds. After this we may consider possible connections between these major theories in social psychology and apply them in understanding complex societal issues (e.g. national identity).

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) advocates an explanatory model for individual behavior. It begins with the individuals' self-categorization to a group (or social category)<sup>2</sup> and often ends in individual level consequences. It has predictions about how the membership to a social category will affect the person's social perceptions, evaluation/emotions, and behavior. These cognitive and affective (self-evaluative) consequences were studied primarily in the intergroup context later ingroup processes (e.g. work motivation, leadership) also came into focus (Haslam, 2004, Haslam et al 2011).

Social Representation Theory does not restrict its scope to the understanding of intergroup relations. It covers a variety of social contexts and processes. It is more descriptive in nature (concerning both the processes of representing and the product of representations), accounts for the functions of representation at a group or societal level. Therefore its main distinctive characteristic is its epistemological stand, as it studies the 'thinking society' not the individuals that are abstracted from their real/everyday social context.

But these differences should not prevent us in trying some sort of theoretical integration between the two theories to gain a more powerful explanatory model (Breakwell, 1993) of intergroup relations. The relationship between these theories is clearly of reciprocal interchange. Social identification does affect social representation and social representations in turn influence social identification. Breakwell (1993, 2001) focuses on the ways in which individual identity dynamics influences the development of social representations. She studies the individual's relations to the process of social representation, and distinguishes four dimensions (awareness, understanding, acceptance, assimilation) in this relation. In her model of Identity Process Theory, she also calls attention to the fact that it is often social representations that give substance to identification processes. She does not forget that identities are developed in a given social context and historic period, therefore social representations formed in these contexts put constraints on identity processes. Most importantly, they attribute different identity elements with positive or negative valence. They also provide ways of how identities should be constructed, what identity management strategies should be used.

I would argue for social representations as shared by different social groups to define the common reference points for intergroup comparison. Group differences in this shared representation enable

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on re-edited chapters of my doctoral thesis at European PhD on Social Representation and Communication, titled 'Between East and West: Hungarians Perceiving Other Nations and Europe', 2004.

<sup>2</sup> In Social Identity Theory the group (or social category) is treated in an abstract way. It does not make difference between groups of different sizes (e.g. a college, a nation, gender) and different sorts (e.g. ethnic, occupational, gender).

group-distinctions to take place (Doise, 1993; Doise *et al.*, 1993). In Breakwell's (2001) words, this would be a way of social representation to guide identification processes by creating a more or less consensual social context with systemic relations between different social groups.

Within this shared system of intergroup relations social identity processes might specify the group perspectives from which a specific object or target is viewed. Social representations might set the paths of intergroup comparisons, thus determining the content of favorable ingroup stereotypes among others. Within the group there would be specific agreements in members representation of the world (e.g. group hierarchy, attributes) that enhance cohesion and identification. It can also specify the consensually accepted position of the group in a multi-group setting (Hagendoorn, 1995). In turn social identification (and ingroup favoritism as its consequence) can motivate differences in social representations through processes of anchoring (Doise, 1999).

On a metatheoretical level (De Rosa, 1994, 2002) the problem of defining a group before (and independently of) studying its consensual beliefs seems to be an adequate question to the researcher of social representation. Including social identification processes into the analysis may help in escaping a possible circularity of Social Representation Theory. But she also states (De Rosa, 1994) that:

“...a social group can never be assumed a priori to be a homogenous whole. In fact individuals belong to a number of social groups and categories simultaneously, and the representations expressed from time to time (either homogenous or contrasting) are also a function of the saliency with which a particular group membership is activated in a specific context and social situation. (De Rosa, 1994, p. 286)

Thus, social identifications, if used as a tool for introducing an independent indicator of group membership, may help in analyzing the social representation processes. But it is these social representational processes that make a difference between studying abstract categories and real social groups (De Rosa, 1994).

## Group perspectives in intergroup relations

Both in Social Representation Theory (SRT) and in Social Identity Theory (SIT) it may turn out that even ingroup members can perceive the social world differently. Those social representations are particularly interesting where intergroup agreement is mixed with significant differences. When different groups have a shared social representation with marked intergroup variations. There is surprising number of examples for this in SR literature: (1) a group might associate government activities to the representation of the Human Rights another might think about it in terms of personal activity (Doise *et al.*, 1999). (2) The representation of Europe might be different from a Greek viewpoint than a French (Chrysochou, 2000) or (3) differ by North-South geographical position (Tapia, 1997). These differences are predominantly caused by differing (sub)group membership although some of the results referred to differences in personal values or experience. And in studying the representation of Europe, De Rosa and Mormino (2000) introduced social memory constructs into the analysis of a social representation along with social identity measures.

## A perspectivist epistemology

To study a kind of a metatheoretical relationship between the two theories and to find a good example where the perspective of a person, a group, a research project becomes important, we may visit McGuire's (1999) perspectivist epistemology. It is an especially interesting theory of science and

it also examines the nature of human representations in a creative way. He starts from a somewhat disappointing claim, that *all* human representations are erroneous misrepresentations of the world. Developing a representation is an effortful and energy-consuming venture, still its result is only an approximation of the surrounding world, never can be a 'true' reflection of it. He emphasizes that all representations are selective, they connect an organism only with some key elements of the environment. Their distortions might come from the underrepresentation, misrepresentation or overrepresentation of the world. Even if it outperforms automatic or random stimulus—response patterns that are developed by all species as a more economical alternative, representation is an inherently deficient form of coping with the high complexity of the self and environment. He goes further by arguing that the real tragedy of knowledge is not its inevitable inaccuracy but that it is indispensable. We have to do what we cannot do perfectly. It is ameliorated only by the fact that every form of knowledge is able to grasp at least something from reality. All knowledge is true – though not to the same extent and not in every context.

His contextualism that is used for building his “psychology of science” proves to be especially useful in understanding the role of differing perspectives in intergroup relations. We can simply take for granted, says McGuire, without turning to scientific relativism, that all sorts of knowledge have limitations. In studying stereotyping, we can thus resist the temptation to correct their distortions by comparing them to an “accurate” representation. Adversely, we might search for contexts, motives, constraints and facilitators that led to a specific kind of a representation. That made a stereotype 'true' or 'useful' for a certain perceiver. We can ultimately improve our understanding of the world in this way by accounting for the role of different contexts and perspectives leading to different representations.

## More than self-categorization

When we talk about 'taking a perspective' that covers most of what John C. Turner (Oakes et al, 1994) called self-categorization, but it is more than a mere act of self-categorization. It is not only about placing the self and others into available and sensible social categories. It positions the self and the compared groups into an overall representation of interrelated groups and contexts (spatial, temporal, social, economic etc.). The concept of perspective would help us to emphasize visual, non-verbal analogies in the research of representation, it contains that all representations have a perspective, all groups or individual have a view point that affects what is represented, how it is represented.

A perspective may have diverse components: social knowledge (beliefs, worldviews and naïve theories), values, perceived position of the self and the ingroup, recollections of the past, and future goals.

## Social Categorization: Stereotyping and Image

In a review of stereotype research Susan Fiske (2000) gave a detailed analysis of the individual processes that are involved in social categorization. Stereotyping was shown to be built on a handful of different individual motives as belonging, understanding, controlling, self-enhancing, and trusting. The role of these motivations together with the characteristics of human information processing was analyzed in social cognition research. An interesting result of this analysis concerns intraindividual conflict. Early stereotyping research (e.g. Adorno et al., 1950) conjectured this conflict to be between conscious and unconscious forces, a more recent wave of research (e.g. Katz & Hass, 1988 - subtle

racism) drew attention to intraindividual cognitive contradictions and ambivalence. These cognitive analyses are based on contradicting social norms of individualism and egalitarianism that are considered to be major social principles in the United States.

But social cognition research in general forgets about the social and group-based processes of stereotyping. Although social categorization means much more than cognitive classification of events, objects and people (Tajfel & Forgas, 1981), its normative and value-based nature is largely neglected. As a central process to social life, it is subjected to pressures, values, and norms of the culture within which it is used.

Tajfel and Forgas (1981) claim that it is necessary to take both individual and group functions into account to understand stereotyping completely. They argue that the main psychological functions of stereotypes for the group are *social causality*, *justification* and *differentiation*. Stereotypes could serve social causes if they explain complex, usually distressful events on a societal level. This social causality appears in social representation processes as familiarizing the unknown. The justification function of stereotypes is not the understanding of a new social phenomenon, but legitimizing acts of the group usually to outgroups. According to Tajfel and Forgas, stereotypes also serve the differentiation of the ingroup from outgroups. These functions are largely social functions that add higher order processes to the intra-individual cognitive functioning. Indeed, individual and social is intermixed in these functions. Tajfel and Forgas acknowledged the primacy of group mechanisms over individual drives.

National stereotypes and images are often viewed as causes or independent variables in empirical investigations or everyday explanations. It is the consequences of having a national self-image that is often investigated. But Social Identity Theory treats stereotypes (with outgroup homogeneity) as consequences of intergroup differentiation. In social representation research, images are treated similarly (Moliner, 1996) as a consequence of the overall representation processes. We will see that there is a growing literature showing individual national and ethnic stereotypes as pieces of a greater puzzle that have systemic interrelations, and ultimately might be building blocks of a lay social worldview, which could be taken as a social representation of intergroup (international or interethnic) relations. We should also acknowledge the fact that even stereotypes of single outgroups serve as delimitation of the ingroup (Brown & Haeger, 1999) defining it by setting its borders. It is through these cognitive comparison processes that the target of social identification is further specified. National stereotypes thus apart from being consequences may also provide a basis for national identification by setting contours to it. If an entire social system (at least an aspect of it) can be built out of the bricks of stereotypes as elementary representations, than social representations would give the molar description of this system, deriving for its holistic features.

## National stereotypes, images

National stereotypes have been in the focus of interest in stereotype research (Katz & Braly, 1933; Allport, 1954) since the beginning. Differences and similarities between national stereotypes are attributed to a wide range of factors from environmental conditions or historical effects through personality characteristics, to cognitive information processing. A common ground for all empirical findings that people tend to personalize these categories by attributing personal characteristics to them. These stereotypic descriptions provide an over-generalized picture of members of a group that is nevertheless widely used in intergroup relations. This is true despite the fact that there might be reservations or uneasiness in responding to explicit stereotype questions (Jonas & Hewstone, 1986).

In a cross-national research project (Phalet & Poppe, 1997) the evaluative judgments inherent in stereotypes, were studied in six “Eastern-European” countries. In accounting for different answer-patterns, a multidimensional evaluative structure of stereotypes was conjectured replicating the morality and competence factors of implicit personality theories. Morality was seen as an important dimension in the perception of outgroups, while ingroup traits were predominantly competence-based. The distinctions between the two evaluative dimensions allowed the researchers to reveal ambiguous ingroup and outgroup stereotypes, besides the moral and competent ‘virtuous-winner’ (in most of the cases: the ingroup) and the immoral and incompetent ‘sinful-looser’ (characteristic of Gypsy and Turkish minorities). Apart from whole-hearted ingroup favoritism (Czech and Byelorussian students), Russians, Hungarians, and Poles had a mixed autostereotype of ‘sinful-winner’, which reflected certain hesitations within the image of the ingroup. Authors also connected outgroup stereotypes to perceived intergroup relations between the perceivers’ and the target country (in terms of relative power and conflict).

Perceptions of intergroup relations also play an important role in the study of international relations (Boulding, 1956; R. Cottam, 1977; M. Cottam, 1986). Here the influence of the worldview or “perceptual milieu” of foreign policy decision-makers on their chosen policy (e.g. diplomatic negotiations, sanctions, armed conflict) is widely studied. The worldview of decision-makers is a concept for a perceptual ‘inference scheme’ or image that they develop. This is a metarepresentation of interrelations between countries. Perceived threat, opportunity, difference between cultures and capability could be examples for these perceptual patterns. The main explanatory dimension is often found to be perceived threat or opportunity in relations between nations. These factors were regarded as shaping a hypothetical foreign policy behavior in laboratory settings (Schafer, 1997) or real life behavior in case studies (R. Cottam, 1977; M. Cottam, 1986). More recently, an interdisciplinary analysis of the conceptual relations between the concept of images and a functional conception of stereotypes has tried to make their similarities explicit (Alexander et al., 1999, Kiss, 2001, 2002b).

European national stereotypes were systematically studied by Peabody (1985) among nine European nations in 1969-70. He had an underlying assumption in his study that there are real differences between nations (attributed national characteristics). His main result regarding stereotypes was that there was a high concordance between totally different sub-samples in their characterizations of each target nation. While the same sub-samples judged different target nations differently. He concluded from this pattern of responses that stereotypes reflected real differences<sup>3</sup> between groups. Separating descriptive and evaluative components of characterizations, he found the descriptive aspect dominant. The two most important descriptive dimensions turned out to be tight-loose and assertive-unassertive by which nations were distinguished. Respondents perceived rather great differences between nations, and they agreed to a large extent in their descriptions. On the evaluative dimension, negative responses were rare in his data and evaluative difference between representative countries of East and West (Russia, America) was not found. Thus as a rather optimistic conclusion of his work he thought traditional stereotypes (prejudices) to disappear in Europe.

Koomen and Bähler (1996) replicated Peabody’s study in a secondary analysis of national representative samples from a variety of European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands). An important difference was the significant influence of ingroup

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<sup>3</sup> This conclusion about real differences between the studied European nations might be premature to draw from Peabody’s data as it reflects only a consensus (false or true) in the stereotypic descriptions.

favoritism within the evaluative dimension of auto- and hetero-stereotypes. These results confirmed that of Peabody's, in that different nationalities had a common representation of perceived nations expressed by intergroup agreement between respondents. They also investigated the interaction between respondents' nationality and the stereotypic view of target nation. These interactions between perceiver and target countries were all significant, showing that perspective-based differences did occur together with between-nations agreement.

This analysis, although it did not use Social Representation Theory as a conceptual framework, showed an interesting aspect of the representation of nations. Koomen and Bähler found considerable amount of differences explained by ingroup favoritism together with a general intergroup agreement that mainly supported Peabody's earlier results. Added to this factor, other aspects of the perceivers' perspective (e.g. geographical place, cultural bonds, socio-economic status) might have also influenced their perception of outgroups. People from different countries (therefore having different group perspectives) had significant agreement in their stereotypic judgments of others (together with considerable differences). This of course does not confirm that these national attributes would be 'true' characteristics of the given nation. But these results do show the signs of a general (intergroup) consensus that is probably derived from a common knowledge (social representation). They found

Further analysis of these results could have taken us to the complexity of analyzing common principle factors and anchoring to group differences of a shared social representation (cf. Doise 1993). Such a thorough analysis could reveal a shared representation of inter-national relations in Europe together with important factors in differing national perspectives.

## Worldviews<sup>4</sup> in stereotype research

Different meanings can be attributed to the concept of worldviews. We saw above that the image of nations in inter-national relations could be seen as the worldview of foreign-policy decision makers. In a systematic analysis of interrelation between national and occupational stereotypes (Hunyady, 1998) it could be also shown that stereotypic trait-attribution of different nations correlate with occupational associations to national categories. Together building up a lay theory of the society with systematic differences between different nations (where a prevalent East-West dimension appears in the mind of Hungarian respondents).

A certain naïve geography might also play an important role in establishing interrelations between perceptions of different nations. In studying the content of European national stereotypes (Linssen & Hagendoorn, 1994), an extension of Peabody's findings was achieved. The role of 'cultural difference' (religion, Latin – non Latin countries), 'geographical features' (North-South position, closeness to perceivers, country size), and 'structural features' of states (perceived political or economic relations) were shown to have explanatory value in accounting for differences between national stereotypes. These factors predicted variance in the four content dimensions of stereotypes (efficacy, emotionality, empathy, dominance). Perceptions of efficacy correlated with perceived economic development, degree of industrialization and with geographic factors. Emotionality was accounted

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<sup>4</sup> In intergroup relations, social representations might be seen as naïve worldviews, implicit theories of international relations. As the social world itself has many aspects more or less connected explanations might include ethnic relations in a given society (e.g. Hagendoorn, 1995) the interrelation of socio-occupational and national representations (Hunyady, 1998) or the logic of geopolitics (Linssen & Hagendoorn, 1994) and international relations (Boulding, 1956; R. Cottam, 1977; M. Cottam, 1986).

for mainly by geographic factors and also by culture. Empathy was seen as related to the geographical size of the country and its perceived political power. Dominance correlated with size, perceived political power and nationalism. Furthermore, geographical factors had an overall main effect on stereotype factors. The importance of the North-South and East-West dimension were studied directly by the technique of association networks in a cross-national research project (De Rosa, 2000). The first results of these analyses show that in some extent South and more East is associated with underdevelopment and represented as being a periphery.

## Social representations and social perception

Social Representation Theory provides a good theoretical framework for the analysis of the role of naïve worldview on the perception of nations. The appearing consensuality in the content of national stereotypes that Peabody found can be attributed not only to being 'true' depictions nations as groups, but also as an indicator of having a shared overall representation of nations and their relations in the mind of European respondents. If there is a shared social representation of nations within Europe this should be organized into some geographical, social and cultural dimensions that people in all countries would judge important. Along these dimensions and in the importance attributed to each of them, there might be considerable differences between national perspectives (cf. Doise, 1993) and systemic differentiation by the perceivers' own national category (their national perspective) that calls for social representational analysis.

Moliner (1996) makes an important distinction between the more general concept of social representations and the specific concept of image (of a firm, university etc.) that can be seen as derived from this representation. He argues that individuals develop an image by relying on a shared social representation, on a common social knowledge that is provided by this representation. Thus social representations are used in constructing an image. As all social representation processes, these cognitions are active construction processes driven by epistemological and social dynamics. He further distinguishes images from social representations as they (1) would not be prescriptive, (2) would be more specific (exclusively connected to one object), (3) cannot be transferred from one object to the other, (4) cannot be generalized and more fluctuant than social representations. The distinction between a more general social representation, which consists much more than just impressions (e.g. explanations, internal relations of all sorts) and a more specific scheme of an object is useful as an analogy to images or stereotypes of nations and the representation of the international context. But here at least, stereotypes are not as idiosyncratic and fluctuant as Moliner considers an image to be.

In the domain of ethnic stereotypes there is an interesting direction of research (Hagendoorn, 1995) that aims at showing systemic organizations of intergroup preference within a nation-state. They find a general agreement among members of a certain ethnic group in their social distance judgments differentiating between several outgroups. These judgments draw a consensual "ethnic hierarchy" that is independent of discrimination. They explain this general agreement in terms of group members having a shared social representation of the ethnic hierarchy, with some variations by social variables (school type, religion). In an extension of the original studies done in the Netherlands, they found in some states of the former Soviet Union that intergroup agreement exists about the ethnic hierarchy of a given society. They take these as examples of a collective representation although without precise differentiation between social and collective representations.

Taken together, these results show that there might be more or less shared social representation of the social world and inter-national relations behind the stereotypic perception of individual nations. Most probably, the intergroup relations between the perceivers' and target country would influence this representation. And a naïve geography would guide the common organizing dimensions of individual differences within this shared representation (e.g. North-South, East-West position, size, distance, social-economic development, similarity in culture). An empirical test examined an interesting consequence of a naïve or subjective geography, by asking people the question "Where would you like to live?" (Gould & White, 1986). The answer patterns to this simple question revealed a mental map of respondents. A set of impressions and images of faraway places, their climate, landscapes, and characteristic culture would have an influence in form these mental maps. When studying the mental maps for school leavers in Britain, they found that the students from different places shared a national viewpoint and also had greater preference for the immediate surroundings. When asking different national samples on the residential desirability in Europe, they found that there was a sharp division between Eastern and Western side of the iron curtain. They also found characteristic between-nation differences in the representation patterns of countries.

In reviewing an interesting section national stereotype research we found that a whole system of inter-national relations could be extracted from these stereotypes and found that the people's naïve geography might provide organizing dimensions for this overall representation.

## Background for the Hungarian perspective and the image of Europe

In other publications I had an empirical analysis of the Hungarian perspective and Hungarians' representation of Europe (Kiss, 2002a). But here we focus on the contexts for these empirical results. These studies necessarily had to be very restricted in their scope. Both the Hungarian perspective on Europe and their image of the continent were grasped only a few measure. But these measures on the other hand are selected and interpreted on the background of previous research and the assessment of the topical points of the Hungarian public thinking.

## A Hungarian, East-Central European perspective

Below I collected some of the crucial components of the Hungarian perspective in representing Europe and the relations between European nations. This collection will be inherently limited by concentrating on a handful of aspects only, the line of analysis can be continued further. The social psychological processes of a national perspective in their entirety can only be reconstructed in cooperation with other disciplines. The analysis of social representation and categorization processes should have been extended and coordinated with (human) geography and history, when discovering the worldview and position of a nation. The influence of future goals and expectations can be outlined together with political science and sociology. The role and position of the nation within the international political system can be traced in cooperation with the discipline of international relations.

The long list of disciplines shows that such an enterprise can be done reasonably only in interdisciplinary cooperation. Thus in a social psychological analysis we can only sketch the outlines of a possible Hungarian perspective in between East and West (Kiss and Hunyady, 2005; Kiss, 2002a).

## Between East and West

It is an often recited, fundamental experience of Hungarians' self-reflections that the nation stands alone in Europe (indeed in the world) with its linguistic isolation, but its past preserved with historical awareness attaches Hungarians to the Carpathian Basin in the geographic center of the continent. Here only a rough sketch could be made on what "East" and "West" meant to Hungarians during their history being geographically in the center, culturally politically and economically in the periphery of Europe, between Eastern and Western European cultures. A number of historical analyses bear the title referring to the intermediate position of Hungary in between East and West (e.g. Kiss, 2000; Romsics, 1998) and the consequences of this position are analyzed. The predominance of the East-West dimension is not new in Hungarian intellectual life. Economic, political and cultural changes in the modern history of Europe were considered as models and challenges motivating social and cultural movements in its periphery. The attitude of 'facing westwards' has been a characteristic of the mentality of Hungarian elites.

A representative exhibition organized at the Hungarian National Museum in 1994, under the title 'Hungarians in the midst of East and West – National symbols and legends', showed the construction of the Hungarian national identity in different cultural spheres. A series of studies were published as a result of associated ethnographic analysis (Hofer, 1996). In introducing these results it is argued that East and West reflects major cultural difference that can be characterized by oppositions of 'passive – active', 'collective – individual', 'feminine – masculine', 'spiritual – material', 'rejoining and preserving'. These antinomies also represent dilemmas constructed and reconstructed in Hungarian art (e.g. Endre Ady's poesy) and public thinking (e.g. the political discourse about EU integration). They live deep in the Hungarian public awareness. It is an interesting fact that these opposing conceptions are said to be present in Greek, Russian, Polish, and Czech culture too (Hofer, 1996). In Hungary the geographical position gained importance by its constitutive role in Hungarian national identity (arriving to the Carpathian Basin, being in between major Empires).

The East-West dimension has been not only a major orientation for Hungarian elites, it also meant a division or schism. Hungary was referred to as a "ferry-country" by one of its greatest poets (Endre Ady, a prestigious author of the literary periodical "Nyugat"[West]). In this poetic symbolism the experiences of dividedness and the decisive role of outside forces is condensed where Hungary is driven ashore once in the East than in the West.

Since Montesquieu, the analysis of cultures and nations reverts to the North—South differentiation from time to time. It returns as a significant factor in shaping national character, mentality or at least stereotypes (Peabody, 1985). The Hungarian commonsense and elite opinions show a parallel to this North-South dimension, as a similar distinction seems to be present between Easterners and the Westerners in the Hungarian thinking (Hunyady, 1998; Kiss and Hunyady, 2005). This East-West dimension deserves further investigation. It could turn out to be fundamental anchoring factor in the evaluation and categorization of nations not only for Hungarians but most probably from other East-Central European national perspectives too.

## History

If collective memories of national history play a significant role in any national identity, this impact is even amplified in Hungary. The special role history plays in arts, in scientific research, in political thinking, and in public opinion can be attributed to many reasons.

One of them is the simple fact that the Hungarian state has a long history, a one thousand years of past which is significant in the region. The first Hungarian king, Stephen I. received the crown from the head of the Roman Catholic Church in 1000 AD. But the history of Hungarians differs in many respects from that of Western European nations. After four centuries of independence, Hungary was divided or dominated by outside empires throughout a major period of its History. Short times of full political sovereignty were only gained in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, between the two world wars and after the democratic changes in 1989. Thus the Hungarian past can also be depicted in relation to neighboring Empires (Ottoman, Habsburg, Russian) and outside dominations (Kiss and Hunyady, 2005).

This history can also be characterized by the duality of transformation and instability. Hungarian history was deeply influenced by European processes. In the modern times, the European intellectual currents beginning with humanism, continued in waves of reformation and Enlightenment, to shifts in modern political ideas and trends of arts have been orienting Hungarian culture and political system. Hungary being a small nation at the economic-political periphery of Europe, and having no political sovereignty, was very much prone to outside influences.

In the long run, the trend of changes was not favorable in the Hungarian History: After the glory of the Hungarian state in the Middle Ages came a series of defeats and the loss of sovereignty; in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the harmony of social and economic development was disturbed by severe and irremediable territorial losses. Instability arises from the intermediate position between East and West, from the internalized tensions, choices and ill-starred fate of the buffer zone. Hungarian history is rich in thought-provoking problems (keeping and regaining autonomy, modernization and traditions, resisting assimilation and domination over minorities, having a nation across political borders). Thus Hungarian history is not only a tool in political (ideological) legitimization for various regimes. In public thinking, reflections to the Hungarian history aroused especially at times of crisis. Then it was meant to be more than a luminous background for the present, often acted as a discursive topic in reviewing and reconsidering the facts and decisions that had led to undesirable consequences (e.g. Szekfű, 1920; Németh, 1990; Bibó, 1986). For 20<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian history, the peace treaty of Trianon after the 1<sup>st</sup> World War presented the greatest challenge for an unprepared political and cultural élite and for the entire nation. The regained sovereignty was achieved within a country with a considerable number of Hungarians remaining outside its borders. This sovereignty was lost soon after the Second World War again.

In this period the revolution of 1956 was the most remarkable event. It left two unforgettable memories in Hungarian collective memory. The first was the feeling of unprecedented national unity on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, when hundreds of thousands of people expressed their unanimous wish to break with Stalinism. The second, experiencing the defenselessness of a small country, being entirely on its own within a divided world, the knowledge that despite their reassurances, declarations of solidarity, and real humanitarian intentions, no other country was prepared to help Hungary in fighting against the invading Soviet troops.

The democratic changes after the fall of communism in East Central Europe naturally gave birth or rebirth to the national principle. The questions arose and the national differences came about how this shift from a quasi-colonial status to an autonomous national policy had happened. In Hungary the generally positively experienced changes of regained sovereignty and freedom were accompanied with a certain backdrop in national self-esteem as a likely consequence of changing framework of reference (Hunyady, 1998). After more than a decade, this national self-esteem has been probably shaded further by longitudinal comparisons of the current position with that of the

recent past and with the positive effects of the slowly but steadily advancing North-Atlantic and European integration.

## Hungarian National Identity

From the above we might derive that Hungarian national identity is accompanied with a moderate, or even 'negative' collective self-esteem as is the case with East Germans within the unified Germany (Kessler & Mummendey, 2002, Blanz et al., 1999, Wenzel et al., 1999 Brown, 2000), for example. Some comparative results confirm (Hunyady, 1998) that having moderate levels of self-esteem is even a more general phenomenon in East-Central Europe extending to Romanians and probably other nations. And maybe generalized to all peripheries around economic-civilization centers. To Hungarians the negative pole is most likely perceived towards East and the positive is associated with West, but not without hesitations and ambivalence. The Hungarian national identity is also very much based on historical recollections and still carries the unsolved dilemma of a disintegrated nation by political borders. Similarly to other small countries, its comparative component is an important characteristic of the Hungarian national identity.

## Conclusion

We cannot understand fully the role and nature of representing (as a process) and the characteristics of the resulting representations if we did not consider the relation between social and individual processes. It was a false division between theories and researches that divided social and individual processes in early times of social psychology. Floyd Allport on one side argued for the exclusive focus on individual processes. Other influential psychologists of the time (e.g. McDougall, Le Bon) also suggested separate levels of analysis for the individual and the group (collective) levels of psychology. Even the far-reaching debate between Tarde and Durkheim could be interpreted as contrasting the collective or individual levels of analysis, although the debate itself was polarized on the issues of sociology vs. psychology. Farr (1981) found this to be the root for two different social psychologies, the psychological social psychology and the sociological social psychology.

Today there are many signs of promising integration of the intraindividual and the social processes in social psychology. Jim Sidanius in his Theory of Social Dominance (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001) introduces an individual level scale (social dominance orientation) to arrive at distinguishing between complete societies with different levels of hierarchy. John Jost elaborated more the possible forms of interchange between individual motivations and perception on one side and overall societal processes on the other. His system justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994) does not only integrate individual motivations and stereotyping to societal processes conserving social differences but he manages to use the results of experimental methods to argue for complex social phenomena. It is also promising to look at possible connections of social representation and social identification processes as we did here in this chapter.

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# New media from a social psychological perspective: characteristics, theories and social impact

Adrienn Ujhelyi

This chapter introduces readers to new media and its influence on society. These forms of communication are constantly changing as is the impact these technologies have on individuals, society, and the world. We will focus on examining the theoretical models that are relevant to the field as well as the practical applications and implications of new communication technology on communication, politics and culture.

## What is so new about new media?

The generic term *new media* seems to escape its very definition. Along with new media itself, its definition changes continuously. Maybe if we give a closer look to the term we can better understand the phenomenon.

Most technologies described as new media are digital, network-structured, interactive, and are made possible through the use of computer technology. Some examples are the internet, computer multimedia, computer games, CD-ROMS, DVDs, digital cameras and mobile phones (Manovich, 2001). But can they be considered as *media* tools? In the recent past the answer was not as obvious as it may seem now: mass media researchers ignored new media for a long time (McQuail, 2002). Their primary reason for that is the fact that it did not meet the classic criteria which were designed for print and telecommunication media. In the beginning it appeared to be no more than a channel for interpersonal communication, an inexpensive and fast mailing system or a subcultural phenomenon: a plaything for researchers and university students. Here is a typical quote from the handbook *Theories of Mass Communication*: "Even if computer literacy were to become universal, and even if every household had a personal computer equipped with a modem, it is difficult to see how a new system of mass communication could develop from this base alone" (DeFleur, Ball-Rokeach, 1989, pp. 335-336). Morris and Ogan, in their landmark article (1996) argued "... if mass communications researchers continue to largely disregard the research potential of the Internet, their theories about communication will become less useful. Not only will the discipline be left behind, it will also miss an opportunity to explore and rethink answers to some of the central questions of mass communications research" (p. 39). They proposed that in order to incorporate new communication technology into mass media research first the categories, concepts and theories must be renewed.

Now we can consider the other word in the term: What is *new* in new media? In a historical sense, the internet is not new at all, its history began in the 1960's as a computer research program at DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency). Furthermore, some researchers date it way back by drawing parallels between internet and previous technologies (e.g. Tom Standage in *The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's On-Line Pioneers*). So in this case rather than 'new' denoting 'recent', perhaps 'uniqueness' is a better

description. Prior to the digital world, the internet contained all forms of communication including printed materials (books, newspapers, magazines), films, analog radio and TV. It is also unique because it integrates both different modalities of communication (interpersonal interaction, broadcasting, individual searching, and person-machine interaction) and different kinds of content (text, video, images, and audio). The old media can be characterized as channels of centralized institutions, broadcasting impersonal messages to masses, in contrast with new media's interactive, personal, contribution-based nature.



Figure 1. Old media vs. new media. Source: [daewonexpresso.blogspot.hu/2012/12/the-survival-of-expresso-old-media-vs.html](http://daewonexpresso.blogspot.hu/2012/12/the-survival-of-expresso-old-media-vs.html)

Although the two forms differ considerably one should keep in mind that there are continuities between conventional and new media. Firstly, technological change is an incrementally and not radically changing process; secondly, what is happening today can be called media convergence. The boundaries between old and new are vanishing: some forms of old media have been digitalized (e.g. online radio, e-book, online streaming) and media became a continuum with many different forms between the clear endpoints: e.g. digitally edited printed books. Convergence appears in many other levels as well: the same content appears on several platforms, or the same platform can contain several types of content.

Besides a historical or a technology-driven definition we can approach the understanding of the medium from a psychological position. Analyzing the social representation of the internet for example can bring us closer to the understanding of its social role. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argued that our representation of a given phenomenon is best revealed by the metaphors we use to describe them: "The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (p. 5). Thus the analysis of these metaphors can uncover the way people relate to, understand and use the internet (Palmquist, 1996; Johnston, 2009; Markham, 2003; Jamet, 2010). One metaphor highlights some aspects while hiding others. One of the earliest metaphors of the internet was the *'highway'*. *'Highway'* emphasized its constructed nature, as if, like a real highway, it was part of the national infrastructure, built, maintained and controlled by central authorities. This popular term from the 1990's conserved the meaning: information superhighway. The medium's informational aspect was represented by the *library* metaphor, describing the internet as an information archive or the collective memory. Internet related words like *'bookmarks'*, *'webpages'*, and *'browsing'* reflect that concept. After the global spread of the new medium, it has seemed to slip out of hand, as it got a life of its own. The natural element metaphors like *fire* and *water* present the web as something huge and unstoppable, which can overwhelm us completely, and which requires exploration and navigation tools. Such words as flaming, firewall or surfing, navigation, piracy, phishing show these associations.

## Usage of new media

### Quantity of usage

In 2013 the number of internet users worldwide has almost reached 2.5 billion according to Internet World Stats (Internet World Stats, 2013). This represented 34.3% of the world's population and a 566.4% growth compared to 2000.

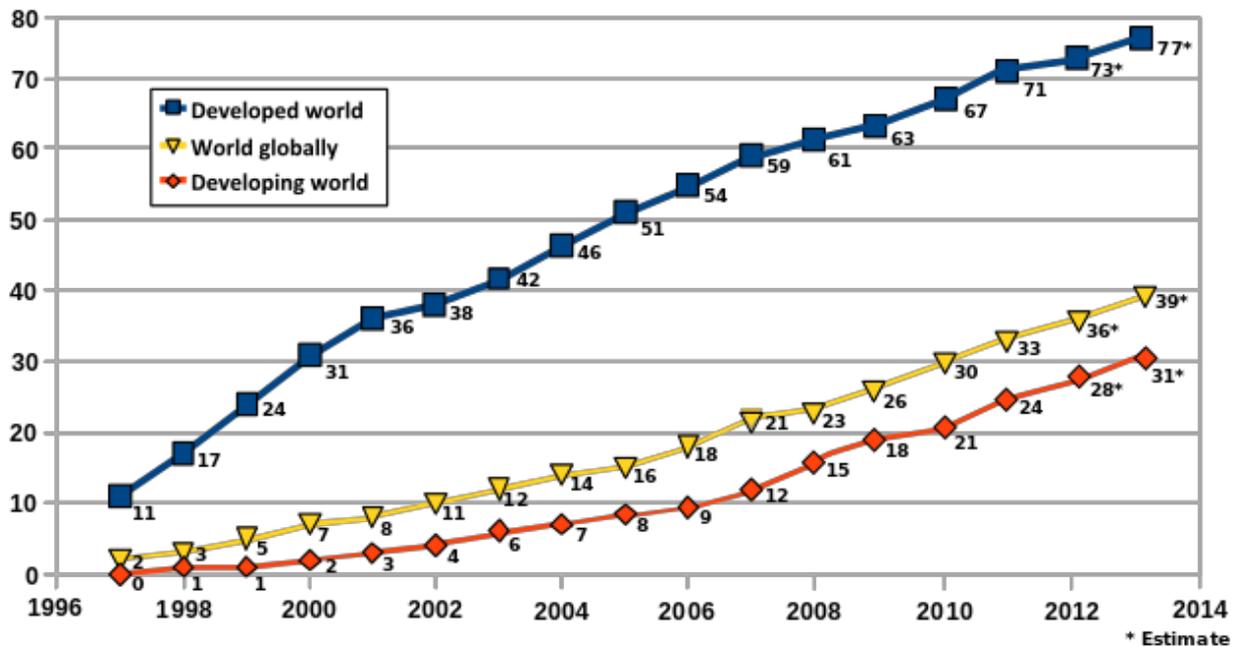


Figure 2. Internet users per inhabitants in %. Source: [www.itu.int/](http://www.itu.int/)

The distribution of internet access is not even. The so-called digital divide still exists, meaning that there are differences between those who are using the internet and those who are not. While the gender gap has closed, geographical location, age, education and household income are still influential factors (see 'first-level digital divide', Hargittai, 2002). Access itself is just one aspect of the problem; today there are more sophisticated measurements of differentiation developed, such as the type of the connection (narrowband or dial-up), the availability of technical help, or ease of access to subscription-based content.

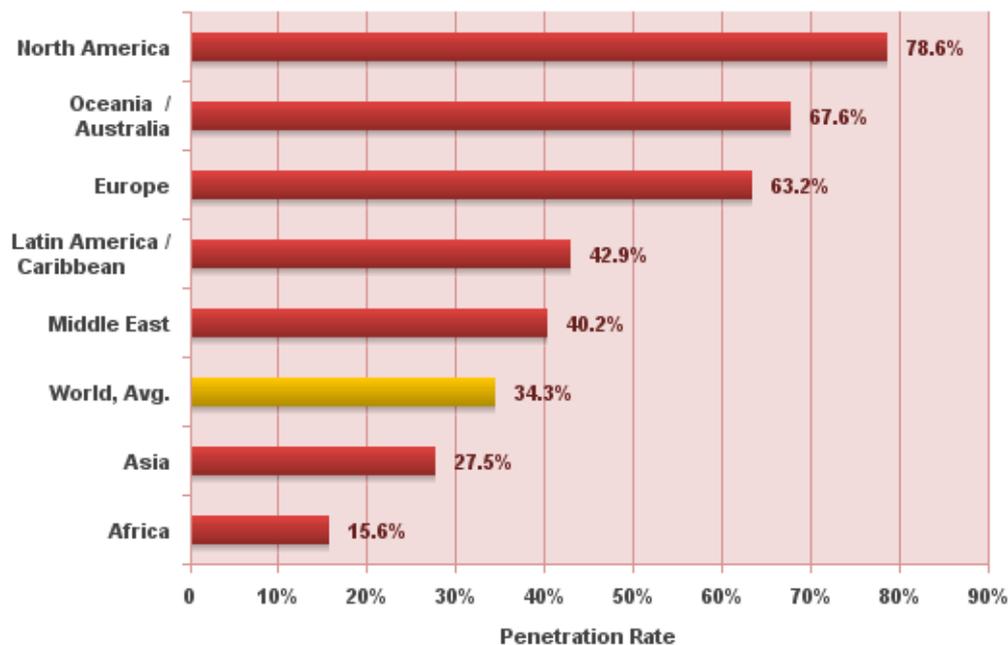


Figure 3. World internet penetration rates by Geographic regions, 2012. Source: Internet World Stats.

Apart from these rather technical issues, one more ‘human’ element has emerged in the literature, which can be the base of another type of, called ‘second-level’, digital divide: digital literacy.

## Quality of usage

Information society confronts its members with questions they are unprepared to answer. People must be digitally literate (able to ‘read’ and ‘write’ new media) in order to live, learn and work successfully. Skills that are required when using new media are not just of technological nature. The digital literacy includes complex technological, cognitive and social skills (Eshet-Alkali, Amichai-Hamburger, 2004).

*Technological knowledge.* It not only covers the use of a variety of technology tools on an *elementary level*, but requires a *different attitude* towards technology. Those who acquire this skill on a higher level are active users: they are able to *personalize* their technological tools, to *create content* and use technology to identify and solve complex problems in real world contexts.

*Cognitive skills.* The importance of images has increased in today’s society; communication is getting more and more dominated by symbols, icons, photos and videos. *Photovisual literacy* is the ability to read and deduce information from visuals. Specifically it means the understanding of basic elements of visual design, technique, and media; comprehension of the use of representational, explanatory, abstract and symbolic images, and the production of visual elements and design (Livingstone, 2004). Other cognitive skills deal with information: identify different sources of information, retrieve relevant information from sources and use technology to enhance searching. These tasks are rather complicated as “the sheer volume of information which many of us are exposed to every day may actually impair our performance and add stress to our lives.” David Shenk (1997) captured the overwhelming amount of information around us with the term ‘data smog’. What makes this task

even harder is the hypertextual nature of the internet: it is a format that enables texts to be organized in a way in which elements interact with one another instead of simply following a straight order. It is necessary to learn how to navigate in this non-linear context, however, information literacy cannot be reduced to the act of finding information, the next step is to assess the information (*quality management of information*): prioritize sources based on credibility, identify false and biased information, and evaluate information considering the social, economic, political, legal and ethical issues that may impact it. To perform such assessment is further complicated by the fact that not only texts but pictures and videos should be analyzed too. Once information is identified and scrutinized, authentic content may be created from the pre-existing textual, visual and audio pieces (*reproduction literacy*). Furthermore, information can be used in an innovative and creative way to avoid purely producing superficial content by cutting-and-pasting (see literature on the so-called 'cut-and-paste generation': e.g. Roth, 1999).

*Social literacy.* New media creates a new social environment, therefore it is imperative to acquire new interpersonal skills to socialize and collaborate in online context. The characteristics of the internet (such as the lack of non-verbal cues, anonymity, etc.) makes communication more difficult, compromise trust and increase aggression, which can hinder the formation of relationships, cooperation and interaction. Users must be aware of the specific behavioral and communication rules (sometimes called 'netiquette'). This competence requires some knowledge of legal, economic and political issues related to the internet, as well as reflected thinking about the advantages and disadvantages of internet use.

Digital literacy is not only important at a personal level. The greater number of digitally literate citizens means cultural, political and economic advantage for the whole society, which will eventually "... influence who will have the power to benefit from information and communication in a technologically-mediated twenty-first century" (Livingstone, 2004. 12.), and furthermore: "If we combine our individual efforts wisely, it could produce a more thoughtful society: countless small acts like publishing a Web page or sharing a link could add up to a public good that enriches everybody." (Rheingold, 2012).

## The characteristics of online communication and their psychological consequences

In order to understand the nature of online communication, we first compare it to face-to-face communication. One of the fundamental differences is *mediatization*, as online communication always implicates technological mediation. This may seem evident but it is often overlooked by users, for example when attributing intentionality to a delayed chat reply. The stress induced by technical problems (slow connection, not user-friendly websites, inaccessible information, etc.) can lead to frustration and eventually to aggression. Online communication can also be characterized by permanence: every message is recorded and can be retrieved, reused, and reflected on again and again.

In face-to-face situations participants are co-present, but when communicating through computers they can exist in significantly different physical environments. As communication has become *independent of place and time*, the role of geographical place and local time has changed too. Physical isolation can lead to a feeling of physical safety which may enhance uninhibited behavior. Even today online communication mainly means text-based communication, which has several psychologically important implications. As text-based communication *lacks non-verbal cues* it

narrows its expressivity and can lead to misinterpretations. Without visual cues, it is more difficult to express attitudes and feelings which can cause a sense of lowered social presence. Communication may seem cooler, unfriendly and task-oriented, it can hinder relationship formation and trust, and weaken social influence (Malamuth et al., 2005; Guadagno, Cialdini, 2005).

It must be noted here that although online text-based communication may seem as normal written communication at first, it has some unique features. Written communication is usually described as a rather abstract, analytical, objective, disengaged, individualized way of communicating opposed to the communal, situational, aggregative and subjective nature of orality. Online communication combines these two: "Telephone, radio, television and the various kind of sound tape, electronic technology has brought us into the age of 'secondary orality'. This new orality has striking resemblance to the old in its participatory mystique, its fostering of a communal sense, its concentration on the present moment, and even its use of formulas. But it is essentially a more deliberate and self-conscious orality, based permanently on the use of writing and print, which are essential for the manufacture and operation of the equipment and for its use as well." (Ong, 1982, pp. 133-134)

On text-based platforms writing skills become more important than the usual social skills and physical appearance. These latter play a crucial role in face-to-face communication, not only in the formation of affection or sympathy, but in indicating the status of the partner. In online context this missing piece of information can alter power relations, and may de-emphasize the impact of status (Hiltz, 1984).

One of the most important and most particular feature of online communication is *anonymity*. Anonymity is not a dichotomous concept, Burkell (2006) identified three aspects of it: (1) Identity protection (to be anonymous in name, not providing identity information); (2) Visual anonymity (as being unseen by others); (3) Action anonymity (when actions either cannot be seen, or cannot be individuated.) The media, lay people and researchers often focus on the drawbacks of anonymity. They claim that it tends to diminish interpersonal commitment, resulting in a higher level of aggression, and a lower level of interpersonal helping behavior; and because of the low level of accountability, it strengthens uninhibited behavior and weakens self-control (Christopherson, 2007).

On the other hand, some researchers argue against the depersonalizing nature of internet communication. Their findings reveal that anonymity might reduce the impact of stigmatizing physical attributes (McKenna, Bargh), can promote interaction, objectivity and problem-solving (Pinsonneault, Heppel, 1997), can give a feeling of freedom which leads to increased subjective well-being (Christopherson, 2007), and can lower the risk of disclosing personal information (Walther, 1996). "Although the medium seems inherently impersonal, there have been many cases observed or reported by the participants of the most intimate of exchanges taking place between persons who have never met face-to-face and probably never will (Hiltz, Turoff, 1978. pp 28)."

When thinking about the internet it is easy to forget that the internet is not a homogeneous entity. It is composed of a number of channels, which have very different technological, psychological, or communicational characteristics. The various internet activities (such as writing a blog, surfing the net, or playing a multi-player game) have diverse social impacts. When differentiating, the following dimensions are the most important (DiMaggio et al., 2001):

- *Level of interactivity*. It can vary from low (reading a website content) to high level (a real-time chat).

- *Synchronicity*. The internet enables not just synchronous (real time) communication, which is similar to personal conversation, but asynchronous communication as well, which occurs with time constraints. This latter has significant psychological implications: the whole communication situation becomes more predictable and controllable, due to the lack of pressure to produce an immediate response.
- *Modality*. The internet includes a range of modalities; one online context can be described with the ratio of the different types of content (such as pictures, videos, texts, audio content).

## Social impact: theoretical background

At the early stages of internet research two extreme views were facing each other. Optimists predicted that the internet would reduce inequality and bring democracy by reducing the cost of information exchange. Here is an enthusiastic quote from the early years: "I used to think that it was just the biggest thing since Gutenberg, but now I think you have to go back farther" (Barlow, 1995. p. 56). Cyber sceptics on the other hand were frightened by the vision of widening social divide, disintegrated society, vanishing social capital, and alienated people. Here is an example of it: "...while all this razzle-dazzle connects us electronically, it disconnects us from each other, having us 'interfacing' more with computers and TV screens than looking in the face of our fellow human beings" (Hightower, quoted in Wellman, 2004. p. 125). Today it is clear that both views were proved to be wrong (DiMaggio et al., 2001).

In the next section we will introduce the theories behind the social impact of the net<sup>5</sup>. These theories can be grouped along two dimensions. The first is the perception of technological change as positive (utopian) or negative (dystopian) in general, the second dimension is based on whether social change is influenced by the characteristics of technology (technological determinism), or whether technology is driven by social factors (social determinism) (Postmes, Baym, 1995).

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<sup>5</sup> When evaluating these theories it is important to keep in mind that they were born in different periods and although their refereed technology has the same name, they are indeed dissimilar. In the 1970's communicating via computers meant teleconferencing and for decades computers were huge and slow machines, and internet communication predominantly covered text messages. Since the 1990's there has been a rapid involvement, the internet has become user-friendly and widespread, therefore we can talk about a mobile, ubiquitous, multimedia network system.

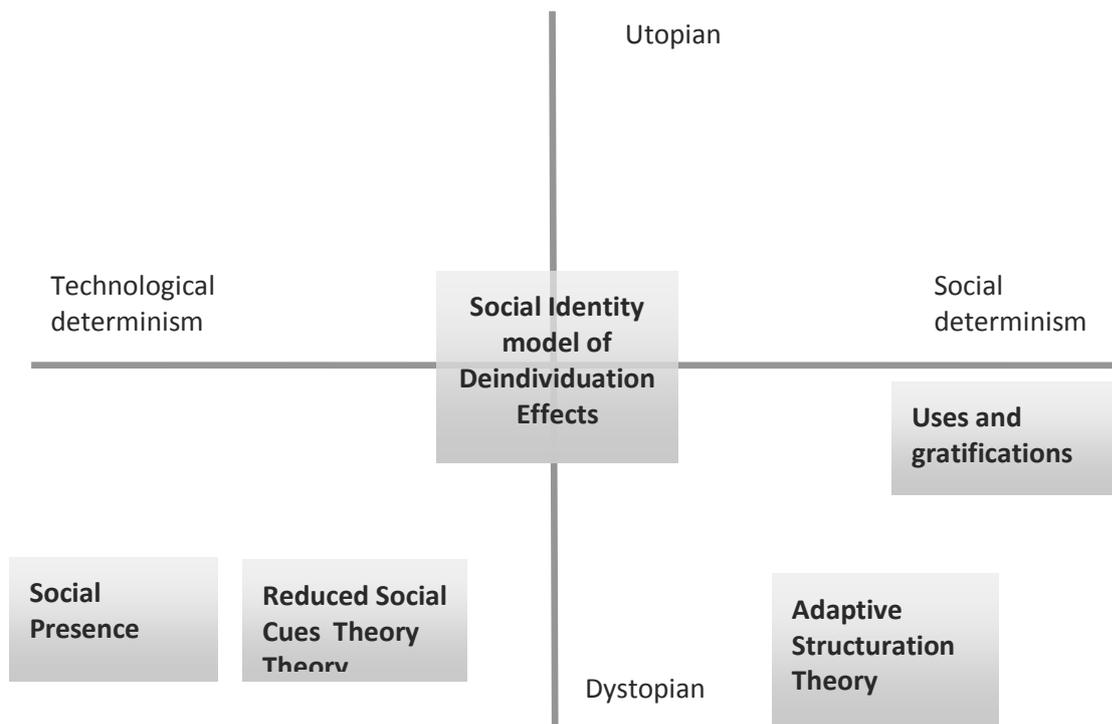


Figure 4. A taxonomy of theories about the impact of internet (Postmes, Baym, 2005)

## Social Presence Theory (Short, Williams & Christie, 1976)

The English research team originally developed the theory in the 1970's to explain the psychological effect of telecommunications media. They defined social presence as the degree of salience between two communicators using a medium. They argued that communication channels differ in their degree of social presence and that these differences play an important role in how people interact: a medium with a high degree of social presence is perceived to be more sociable and warm, whereas a medium with a low degree of social presence is seen as less personal. As a result of many research they concluded that Computer-Mediated-Communication was inherently impersonal because nonverbal and relational cues are filtered out, the possibility of regulating feedback (such as gestures, nods, and tone of voice) was reduced, which made communication ambiguous and equivocal.

## Reduced social cues theory (Kiesler, Siegel & McGuire, 1984)

This theory has many connections with the abovementioned Social Presence Theory. The basic idea of this model is that people interpret social context with the help of cues. There are static (such as personal appearance and environment), and dynamic cues (such as non-verbal communication, behavior). In the absence of these cues the social norms are less salient and as a consequence the behavior is less influenced by them. This means that the communication is more impersonal, task-oriented on the internet, it enables very little socio-emotional and relational communication, and as a consequence there would be more uninhibited and aggressive behavior.

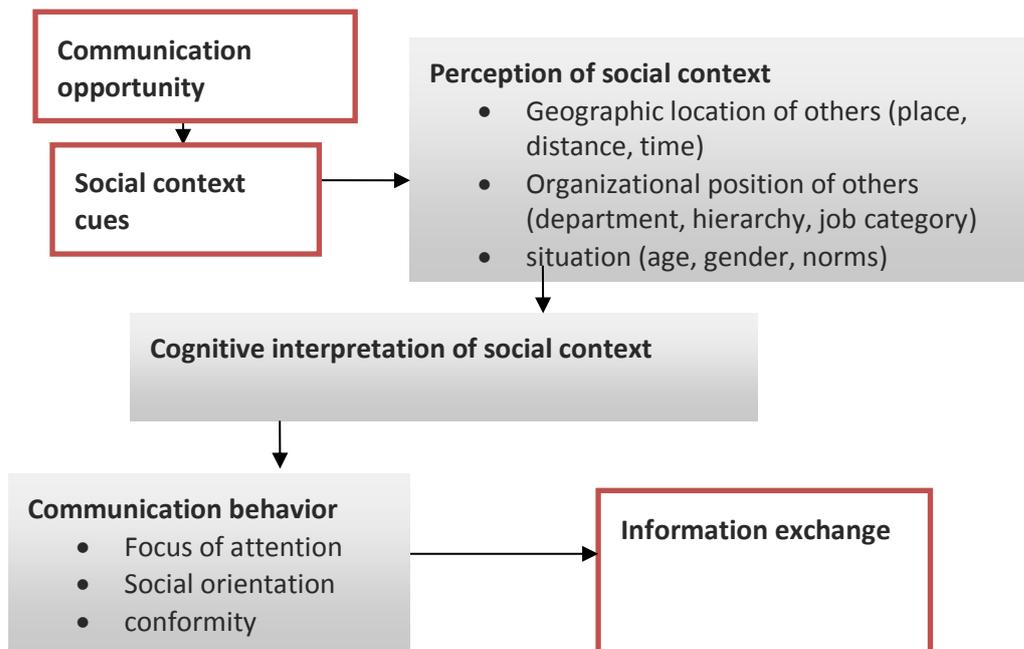


Figure 5. Communication consequences of reduced cues. Sproull and Kiesler (1986) grey: person variables, red: environmental variables

## Media richness theory (Daft, Lengel, 1986)

The Media Richness Theory builds on the concepts of social presence and reduced cues. Daft and Lengel argued that media varied in their ability to enable users to communicate. Rich media were those with a greater multiplicity of cues (multimodality), the ability to personalize the message, and more rapid or immediate feedback (interactivity). The richest communication type is the face-to-face communication, the least rich is the traditional written media. Online communication is said to be somewhere in between.

The common problem with these approaches is their technologically deterministic and normative nature. Social presence or media richness does not refer to an objective property: individual perception and social context can influence this attribution.

## Uses and Gratifications

Opposed to former approaches, the Uses and Gratification Theory focuses on the motivation of media usage. It presents the use of media as a rational and active choice driven by certain goals and needs (Blumler, Katz 1974). It also states that people's social and psychological characteristics also influence how they use and respond to a medium. Katz, Gurevitch and Haas differentiated (1973) the following typology of motivations for media use:

- *Cognitive needs.* Finding out practical information, seeking advice and opinion, learning.
- *Affective needs.* Entertainment, getting intrinsic cultural or aesthetic enjoyment.
- *Personal integrative needs.* Find reinforcement for personal values and models of behavior, deepen self-knowledge, and enhance status.
- *Social integrative needs.* Gain a sense of belonging, interact with others; find companionship, gain social empathy.
- *Tension release needs.* Escaping, relaxing, filling time.

The broad range of empirical studies in the Uses and Gratification tradition examined - among others - newspapers (Elliott, Rosenberg, 1987), radio (Mendelsohn, 1964), television (Ferguson, 2007), video player (Cohen et al., 1988), mobile phones (Leung, Wei, 2000), and email (Dimmick et al., 2000).

This theory was the first of the traditional media theories applied to study the new media (Table 1). Findings show that the internet can fulfill the needs described in connection with traditional media in

<b>User</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic aspects (expectations)</li> <li>• Motivational aspects (self-esteem, possible selves)</li> <li>• attributes (personality, gender)</li> </ul>	
<b>Media choice</b>	
<b>Media usage</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific and general effects</li> <li>• Predicted and emergent effects</li> </ul>	
<b>Psychological consequences</b>	<b>Behavioral consequences</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in self - awareness</li> <li>• lowered feeling of responsibility</li> <li>• salience of social identity</li> <li>• possible mood changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-disclosure</li> <li>• flaming</li> <li>• assertiveness</li> <li>• information seeking</li> </ul>

Figure 6. The motivated internet-user: using the internet from the Uses and Gratification approach (Joinson, 2003. p. 177.)

novel ways (Ebersole, 2000; Eighmey, 1997; Kaye, Johnson, 2002; Perse, Dunn, 1998), furthermore, it can often create new motivations, such as *interpersonal communication* (Papacharissi, Rubin, 2000), *virtual community* and *aesthetic experience*, (Song et al. 2004); *altered state of consciousness* (Suler, 1999), *personal involvement* (Eighmey, McCord, 1998), and *anonymity* (Choi, Haque, 2002). The most frequently studied psychological factors influencing internet usage were the following: *media perception*, *unwillingness to communicate* (Papacharissi, Rubin, 2000); *shyness* (Birnie, Horvath 2002); *extraversion*, *neuroticism* (Amichai-Hamburger, Ben-Artzi, 2000); *self-efficacy* (Eastin, La Rose, 2000).

Authors & years	Gratifications obtained
McQuail, Blumler, and Brown (1972) [TV quiz programs]	Diversion, personal identity, personal relationships, educational, excitement
Greenberg (1972) [Children watching television]	Learning, habit, relaxation, arousal, pas championship
James Lull (1982) [Social uses of television]	Environmental, regulative, communicat facilitation, social learning, affiliation/ avoidance, dominance/competence
Mukherji, Mukherji, and Nicivich (1998) [Internet]	Entertainment, interpersonal utility, so interactions, and surveillance
Lin (1993) [Television]	Informational guidance, interpersonal communications, entertainment, divers
Shaver (1983) [Cable television]	Variety and control over viewing
Rubin (1984) [Television]	Relaxation, habit, entertainment, inform escape
Korgaonkar and Wolin (1999) [Web usage]	Social escapism, transaction, privacy, information, interaction, socialization, economic motivations
Stafford et al. (2004) [Internet]	Process, content, social
Svennevig (2000) [Internet]	Diversion, personal relationships, social relationships, personal identity, surveil imagination, stimulation, and mood ch

<sup>a</sup> Terms in the parentheses [ ] in this table are the communication media

Table 1. Uses and gratifications studies (Roy, 2009)

## Social Identity Theory of Deindividuation (Reicher, Spears, Postmes, 1995)

The Social Identity Theory of Deindividuation (SIDE, Postmes et al., 1998) attempted to overcome the deterministic nature of the earlier theories: the model tried to take into account the technological and social aspects of media use at the same time. SIDE is based on the Social Identity Theory and the Self-categorization Theory and aims to define the complex impact of anonymity. The model suggests that anonymity does not necessarily leads to deindividuation and disinhibited behavior. Researchers argue that when social identity is salient, the anonymity of the group members would decrease attention regarding interpersonal differences and enhance the salience of the group and social identity. Such situations would result in a greater adherence to group norms. In other cases however when personal identity is salient, anonymity would encourage personal and individual responses. Whether the depersonalizing effect of Computer Mediated Communication leads to more negative or more positive behavior relative to face-to face interactions is said to depend on the content of those group norms. SIDE also distinguishes between the psychological consequences of two different aspects of anonymity in groups: anonymity of group members to self (cognitive impact), and anonymity of self to others (strategic aspect).

## Social impact: empirical background

As we already stated at the beginning of the chapter, the social psychological study of the internet is still in its early phase. In order to introduce the still fragmented research, we tried to categorize them. We have to add here that this categorization does not reflect the intentions of the researchers, it only attempts to facilitate understanding.

We divided the studies into four broad categories, based on their level of approach: individual, interpersonal, (inter)group and societal. The following examples do not cover the whole range of studies, we have chosen the most important and referred ones, and those that approach from social psychology or are relevant (Table 2).

<b>individual</b>	self-presentation (Bargh, McKenna, 2002), identity expression on the internet (Turkle, 1996), depression (Kraut et al, 1998, 2001) personality correlates of internet usage (Amichai-Hamburger, Vinitzky, 2010; Birnie, Horvath, 2002; Alonzo, Aiken, 2004; Sohn, Leckenby, 2001), internet addiction (Young, Rodgers, 1998); gender switching (Roberts, Parks, 1999); virtual identity, self-presentation, (Zhao et al., 2008)
<b>interpersonal</b>	impact of the internet on social interactions (DiMaggio et al., 2001; Katz, Rice, 2002), online dating (Park, Floyd, 1996); aggression in online games (Anderson, Bushman, 2001); online relationships (Ben-Ze'ev, 2005), online persuasion (Guadagno, Cialdini, 2005) cyberbullying, online aggression (Malamuth et al., 2005)
<b>(inter)group</b>	Stigmatized groups (McKenna, Bargh, 1998), impact of the internet on communities (Howard et al., 2001; Putnam, 2000), intergroup communication (Postmes, Baym, 2005), online minimal group paradigm (Amichai-Hamburger, 2005); online group dynamics (McKenna, Green, 2002), joining online groups (Galegher et al. 1998)
<b>societal</b>	digital divide (Katz, Aspden, 1997; Liff, Shepherd, 2004), network society (Castells, 1996) digital generation (Tapscott, 1994; Prensky, 2001), social capital (Resnick, 2002; Wellman et al, 2000)

Table 2. The most important studies on the social impact of the internet

## Individual level social consequences

The most typical question in the first – individual – section is whether there is correlation between the different personality factors and the quantity of internet usage (in order to reveal addiction risks), various internet activities, online communication style or the social consequences of it. The most studied personality factors are the dimensions of the Big Five Inventory (Amichai-Hamburger, Ben-Artzi, 2000; Tuten, Bosnjak, 2001), anxiety (Scealy et al., 2002), shyness (Birnie, Horvath, 2002), need for closure (Amichai-Hamburger et al., 2004), need for cognition (Tuten, Bosnjak, 2001), sensation seeking (Alonzo, Aiken, 2004) and at the locus of control (Sohn, Leckenby, 2001). Bargh and his colleagues (2002) have drawn the concept of True Self (the traits or characteristics that they possess and would like to but are not usually able to express) from Rogers in order to describe the self within an online context. They have argued that on the internet people are more prone to express their Real Self than in a face-to-face encounter. They have also claimed that certain features of internet communication such as anonymity and decreased risk of self-disclosure can lead to deeper and more intimate relationship with the partner and as a consequence, people will disclose aspects of themselves that are not widely known to others. In order to prove this, they conducted several experiments. They measured the response time of the respondents for previously measured characteristics of their true and actual selves (representation of the attributes that one actually possesses). Their results showed that the participants' true selves were more accessible in memory after interacting with a stranger online compared to a face-to-face conversation. Moreover, they found that they tended to like each other more when they meet first online compared to face-to-face. While most of the earlier studies examined anonymous environment, Zhao et al. (2008) investigated "anonymous" sites. They argued that people tend to act differently in those two types of online settings. They stated that for instance on Facebook a "hope for possible self" is displayed, which cannot be revealed in offline context for various reasons. The internet creates a great venue for identity playing: "The Internet has become a significant social laboratory for experimenting with the constructions and reconstructions of self that characterize postmodern life. In its virtual reality, we self-fashion and self-create" (Turkle, 1995. p.180). The network creates an opportunity for not just some self-enhancement, but for total change, such as gender switching (Roberts, Parks, 1999).

## Interpersonal level social consequences

The central question of the studies examining the social impact of the internet on the interpersonal level is whether the internet makes us lonelier. The answer is rather contradictory. Some of the authors look at the net as a substitute for real relationships, depriving people of real human contact and describe its social impact as threatening: leading to depression, loneliness, less communication with close relations and less social support (Reduction Hypothesis: Nie, Hillygus, 2002; Nie, Erbring, 2002; Kraut et al., 1998). Others have not found any differences between the social relations of internet users and non-users (Gershuny, 2002). A third group of researchers argues that the internet can bring beneficial impacts: internet users spend more time with both online and offline friends, their level of social activity and the number of their friends increased (Neustadl, Robinson, 2002; Horrigan, Rainie, 2002). Some of the discrepancies can be explained by the differences in short- and long-term effects (Kraut et al., 1998, 2001). If relevant mediating factors are taken into account such as the users' attitudes towards the internet, we may get a clearer picture: those, who regard the internet as an impersonal context, will form less contact and initiate less personal communication. In a summarizing article Valkenburg (Valkenburg, Peter, 2009) draws attention to another influential

factor: time. Internet itself has changed a lot since the 1990's, when the reduction hypothesis received empirical support. At that time the internet was not as widespread, so online contacts were separated from offline contacts. Today, with the huge rise in internet penetration, this type of digital divide is almost non-existent. Additionally, the most popular sites and activities of the 1990's, such as MUDs (Multi-User Dungeons) and public chat rooms were designed and used for communication between strangers. In recent years social networking sites have predominated the internet, which encourage communication with offline contacts. These changes in media usage lead to another theory (Internet Enhanced Self-disclosure Hypothesis), which emphasizes the positive effects of internet usage in terms of increased online disclosure, more intimate, quality relationships and increased subjective well-being.

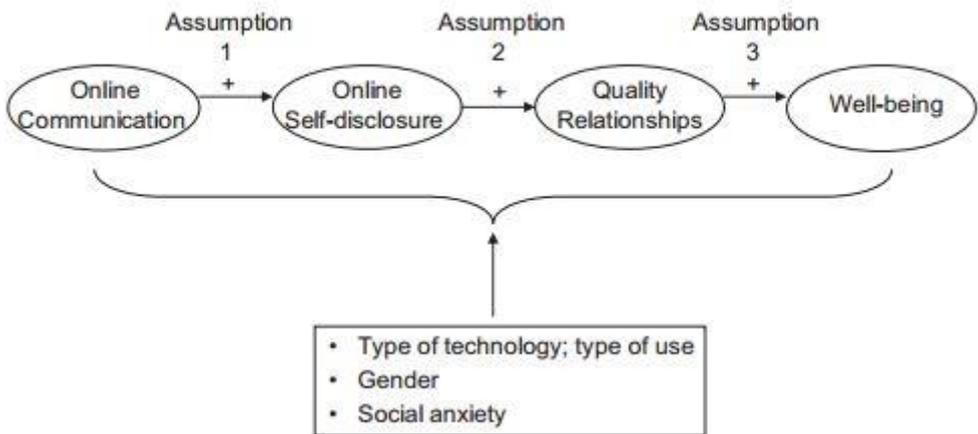


Figure 7. The Internet-enhanced self-disclosure hypothesis (Valkenburg, Peter, 2009)

According to Ben-Ze'ev (2005) online romantic relationships can be described with juxtapositions, as they are essentially long-distance relationships with the benefits of the close ones, combining the high value of the latter with the lower investment of the former. This ambivalence is reflected in the term: *detachment* – detached attachment. It can be characterized by physical distance and immediacy in a temporal sense. As the internet enables partners to communicate from different locales at the same time, “while they are in cyberspace, they are actually in the same place (Ben-Ze’ev, 2005. P. 120.)”. While traditional romantic relationships can be described by direct, continuous contact, in the cyberspace the physical separation makes the relationship detached, although, emotional immediacy is present. The more anonymous environment can encourage concealment or lying but also greater self-disclosure. Communication online is limited in a sense (e.g. lacking nonverbal cues), but text-based communication can be richer in other senses: people may provide more profound information, usually ask more intimate and less peripheral questions (Tidwell, Walther, 2002).

Another very important topic on the interpersonal level is the link between aggression and computer games. A meta-analysis of the results of 35 studies (Anderson, Bushman, 2001) revealed that exposure to violent computer and online games lead to increased offline aggression. The most important explanation is the extremely high exposure: 80 percent of computer games are aggressive in nature. These games are easily accessible, lacking either the societal or parental control. Compared to television this new technology holds a greater level of risk, because of the underlying psychological processes. The interactive nature of the internet makes it possible for the participant to play a more active role in the events, leading to stronger identification with the aggressor. The perceived reality of these games are much higher than in the case of passive television watching, and the aggressive acts are rewarding, they are usually followed by immediate reinforcement in the form

of points or level up messages. The internet does not only contribute to the traditional triggers of aggression but can produce very unique forms or dress up existing phenomena with new properties. We can mention here flame wars (hostile interaction between users), viruses, hoaxes, hackers or trolls (a person who tries to disrupt an online community's discussion by starting arguments, and provoking or upsetting participants). The activity that received most scientific and media attention is cyberbullying. It is a type of online harassment and defined as "the use of Information Technology to harm or harass other people in a deliberate, repeated, and hostile manner" (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services). Despite of having its offline counterpart (traditional bullying) it has some unique features: electronic bullies can remain virtually anonymous, leaving victims more vulnerable. The old type was geographically located, but cyberbullying exits in the schoolyard and penetrates the walls of homes; the exposure is ubiquitous, extended in time and space. Further, the circle of witnesses is much larger (Ortega et al., 2009), it can be as large as the internet itself.



Figure 8. Screenshot from a first-person-shooter game

## Group level social consequences

Group-level research usually examines the social impact of the internet on communities. Some of them emphasize the negative consequences (Putnam, 2000), while others focus on the positive influence (Rheingold, 1993). The research of McKenna and Bargh (1998) on stigmatized groups belongs to the latter: they investigated the offline effects of belonging to online stigmatized groups (groups based on a shared stigmatized identity e.g. homosexuality), and they have found that participation in these groups can lead to elevated well-being, self-acceptance and self-esteem, and eventually to a 'coming-out' in real life as well.

Some researchers went back to the classics of social psychology: Amichai-Hamburger (2004) replicated Tajfel's famous experiment (1970) in a chat room, and demonstrated that the results, originally obtained in face-to-face settings, also occurred in the online environment, meaning that the online experience is very real for participants. Asch's (1951) conformity experiment was also replicated (Smilowitz et al., 1988) revealing that in the online context conformity decreases but does not vanish completely.

The flourishing of online hate groups points beyond the group level phenomenon. Articles describe the way how these groups use different forms of internet channels (blogs, websites, chat rooms, forums, etc.) for recruiting and spreading their prejudiced ideology (Douglas, 2007; Glaser, Kahn, 2005).

## Societal level social consequences

A good example for the societal level research is Paul Resnick's study (2002) which examines the impact of internet on social capital. In this article he introduced a new concept called SocioTechnical Capital, suggesting that the new information and communication technologies can contribute to our social capital. He focuses on the ability of the internet to facilitate new types of social relationships. The empirical results of Wellman (Wellman et al., 2002) also accentuate its complementing nature. Wellman named it 'participation capital', implying that the internet offers more opportunities for increased participation in organizational and political activities. Other researchers are rather on the pessimistic side, they study the so-called digital divide, the way how the internet can amplify social inequalities or create new break lines. This line of work has a great tradition in the sociological literature (Norris, 2001; Guillén, Suárez, 2005; Korupp, Szydlik, 2005).

The socialization of the new generation is another prominent topic in the literature. To highlight the very different nature of children who were born during or after the widespread introduction of digital technologies, authors gave them different labels: digital generation (Tapscott, 1994), digital natives (Prensky, 2005), Z-generation, iGeneration or Nintendo generation (Horowitz, 2012). They are described as being technology savvy, creative, more tolerant, multitaskers, having decreased attention spans and even rewired brains (Tapscott, 1994; Greenfield, 2003). The concerns of the digital immigrant adults are well captured in the following quote: *"The popularity of this new pastime among children has increased rapidly. This new invader of the privacy of the home has brought many a disturbing influence in its wake. Parents have become aware of a puzzling change in the behavior patterns of their children. They are bewildered by a host of new problems, and find themselves unprepared, frightened, resentful, and helpless. They cannot lock out this intruder because it has gained an invincible hold of their children."* Aziel Eisenberg noted this in 1936 - about the radio. New inventions always bring great promise and great concerns about their effect on children's development. "Although we tend to see these issues as being new, similar promises and concerns have accompanied each new wave of media technology throughout the past century: films in the early 1900s, radio in the 1920s, and television in the 1940s. With the introduction of each of these technologies, proponents touted the educational benefits for children, while opponents voiced fears about exposure to inappropriate commercial, sexual, and violent content. (Wartella et al., 2000)".

## Internet as a tool of research

Apart from being the target of research, the internet can also serve as a research tool (Table 2). According to statistics (Reips, Lengler, 2005), social psychology ranked second among psychological disciplines in terms of the number of web experiments. The Prophis Research (Prophis Summary Report, 2002) reported that 74 percent of the scientists they interviewed conducted online research methods in the past year.

<b>Survey, questionnaire</b>	Parks, Floyd, 1996; Buchanan, 2000.
<b>experiment</b>	Glaser et al., 2002; Greenwald, Farnham, 2000.
<b>Qualitative methods</b>	Focus group (Rezabek, 2000); network analysis (Barabási, 2002); online interview (Davis et al. 2004); document analysis (Schütz, Machilek 2003); participative observation (Rheingold, 1993).

Table 1. Social psychological studies using the internet as a research tool

Internet or internet-based technologies can renew the methodology of social psychological research, by making every step of a research easier: data collection, data recording and publishing. It provides access to larger and more diverse samples and makes the whole process faster and cheaper. Along this line, underrepresented groups or special population can be reached, such as gays, lesbians and bisexuals (Mathy et al., 2002) or people with hearing loss (Cummings et al., 2002). Apart from efficiency another advantage is its power to create professional online communities for sharing knowledge or distributing publications (like Researchgate). Many researchers simply translate pre-existing methods to online forms: for instance, Milgram's 'lost letter' technique has been adapted for online use with using 'lost e-mails' (Stern, Faber, 1997). Others invent more innovative approaches: Glaser (Glaser, Kahn, 2002) in his experiment disguised himself as a newcomer to a White Supremacist online group and posed several questions investigating what factors lead to hate crimes. The questions varied according to a 3x3 factorial design: three kinds of threat (interracial marriage, job competition with Blacks and Black migration into White neighborhood) on three levels (personal, local and national). Members of chat rooms were randomly addressed with one of the questions and the responses were coded according to their level of violence. Results revealed that racists found interracial marriage (i.e. threat to social identity) far more threatening than economic issues.

There is also a dark side to online methods: for instance, the results of online surveys can be necessarily representative of the general population; the anonymity of the context can also be a disadvantage as the parameters of the participants cannot be controlled. There are also technical constraints and the high rate of non-response. One of the most important challenges is the formulation of new ethical codes to address emerging problems: difficulties in asking for an informed consent, the cost of debriefing or ensuring complete privacy. It is such an important problem that the Journal of Information Society dedicated a special issue to the subject in 1996. It was followed by several themed workshops, meetings and articles (Michalak, Szabo, 1998). Due to the ever-changing nature of the medium new ethical concerns still continue to emerge. Most recently the following books discussed these concerns: Hoerger & Currell (2012) authored *Ethical Issues in Internet Research*, a chapter in the *APA Handbook of Ethics in Psychology*; and, Fisher & Vacanti-Shova (2011) published *The Responsible Conduct of Psychological Research: An overview of ethical principles, APA ethics code standard and federal regulations*.

## Even newer media

At a conference in 2004, Tim O'Reilly<sup>6</sup> coined the term, web 2.0, by which he described a new trend in internet platforms. This frequently quoted term stands for those second generation web technology and design that can be described by features like participation, personalization, and collaboration. Web 2.0 denotes several different concepts (Cormode, Krishnamurty, 2008): a particular set of technologies (AJAX); the tools and techniques provided by these technologies, (sometimes called social media<sup>7</sup>: podcasts, RSS feeds, social networks, text messaging, blogs, wikis, virtual worlds); and sites which incorporate a strong social component (Facebook, Twitter, Myspace) or which encourage user-generated content (Wikipedia, YouTube, Flickr). These online platforms or

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<sup>6</sup> Other sources cite an earlier mentioning (McCormack, 2002)

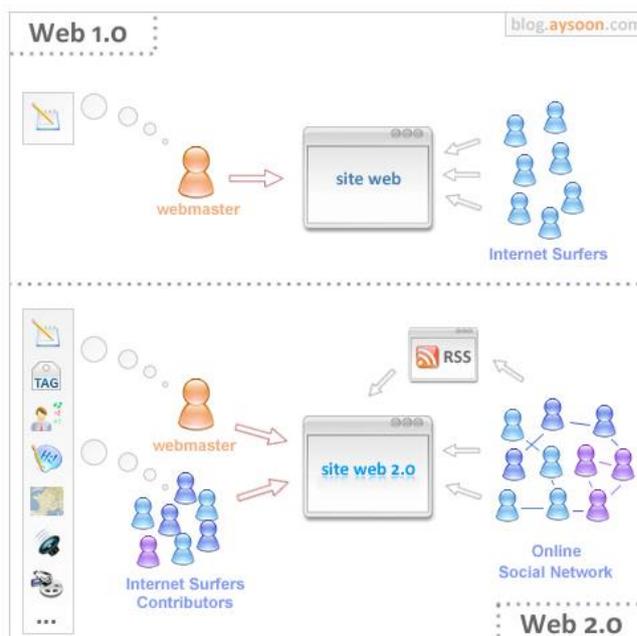
<sup>7</sup> There is no consensus in the literature about the relation of web 2.0 and social media. Mostly they are treated as synonyms, but others found it important to differentiate the two. One example states that web 2.0 focuses on content while Social Media focuses on people. Others say that web 2.0 is the umbrella-term, social media is just one type of it.

applications allow for one-to-one, one-to-many, or many-to-many synchronous or asynchronous interactions between users who can create, archive and retrieve content, create groups, lists or circles of "friends" or "followers" who have access to content and can participate in dialogue.

The key features of web 2.0 are the following:

- *Folksonomy.* Web 2.0 allows users to create free classification/arrangement of information by tagging, which involves locating and marking webpage with a metadata label. This 'tagging' is carried out by the users themselves according to their own knowledge and understanding of the issues, thus a hierarchical classification is replaced by a more democratic process (wisdom of the crowds) (Mathes, 2004).
- *User as contributor.* Web 2.0 provides users with tools to create content, services, communities, and to collaborate with other people. The user is no longer a passive consumer of media content, but rather he shapes it interactively: creates, enriches and shares. From a more critical approach there is a fear for the emergence of the cult of the amateur (Keen, 2007).
- *Rich user experience.* Compared to the static pages of traditional web, web 2.0 represents dynamic, rich user experience to users.
- *Democratizing nature.* Web 2.0 contents are made available to share, reuse, redistribute and edit, thus presupposing a basic trust in others. Because of the absence of centralization, gatekeepers and censors, cooperation takes over controlling. This participation may lead to a new collaborative, participatory or open culture, where anyone can get involved, and everyone has the potential to be seen or heard. (Beer, Burrows, 2007). It also poses new challenges: the blurring of private and mass communication (privacy), questions about the quality of content and copyright issues.

(Beer, Burrow, 2007)



Social media has a profound effect on different fields of society: journalism, economics, politics etc. Here we are focusing on the social psychologically relevant phenomenon, by introducing a number of empirical research in the field.

The first study (Deters, Mehl, 2013) focused on Facebook status updates on psychological well-being. Results revealed that an increase in posting status updates reduced loneliness due to feelings of connectedness, and this effect was independent of the received social feedbacks (e.g. likings). Yet Facebook can be responsible for more negative consequences as well. Another study (Litt, Stock, 2011) focused on the interpersonal

level - the impact of Facebook photos on social norms. Participants (189 young adolescents) were asked to look at fabricated Facebook profiles either showing older peers consuming alcohol or not.

The results revealed that the photos viewed served as descriptive norms for the adolescents. After just a short scan of the profiles, alcohol-related cognitions changed: willingness to drink alcohol increased, attitudes towards alcohol became more favorable and their own perceived vulnerability for alcohol-related consequences has lowered. The platform can be blamed for creating jealousy and suspicion in romantic relationships, a phenomenon called Facebook jealousy. Many research (Muise et al., 2009; Elphinston, Noller, 2011; Marshall et al. 2012) showed that Facebook had a negative impact on romantic relationships, because it allows the constant monitoring of the partner which creates and reinforces jealousy. A large number of teenagers reported that this kind of social control is part of their daily routine, and it usually extends to previous relationships even many years after the breakup. One of the most controversial topics concerning social media is its impact on political activism. While some talk about social media revolution (emphasizing its power in facilitating political involvement), others blame it for the spread of 'slacktivism' (when online activism replaces real activism) (Christensen, 2011; Tufekci, 2011; McGarty et al., 2013).

## Conclusion

In order to understand the function of the new media in society, results revealed by research has to be summarized from time to time, and has to be put into historical context. Not only the media itself is in a flux, but its perception is changing constantly. During the past decades the internet has become an inseparable part of our everyday life, and it is not an object of fascination any more. Researchers call this the 'mainstreaming' (Lievrouw, 2004) or 'banalization' of the new media (Herring, 2004). The internet has changed a lot from its' early years, and its' users changed as well. Nowadays they are more concerned about privacy issues, the maintaining of a 'liveable' online environment is a priority nowadays, users are less tolerant of abuse of freedom of expression and are more willing to accept restrictive legislation in order to control behaviors like cyberstalking, online harassment, trolling and spamming.

The internet is not an easy phenomenon to "catch". It can be conceptualized as a technology, an agent of communication, a cultural context or an autonomous organism (Ropolyi, 2006). This complexity is reflected in the disciplinal diversity of the studies: researchers approach from the fields of sociology, pedagogy, politics, law and media, etc. Our social psychological approach is still an emerging domain of research. The connection of social psychology is a mutually beneficial relation: social psychology can provide useful new perspectives for internet research as it incorporates both the social and the individual – psychological – element. Its existing theories and concepts are particularly useful in such understudied domains as intergroup relations. On the other hand, the online reality with its special characteristics gives the opportunity for social psychology to test its pre-existing methods and results in an 'alternative reality'. Further gain could be the internet as a research tool, ranging from simple (but really effective) online questionnaires to three-dimensional virtual environments (Blascovich, et al. 2002).

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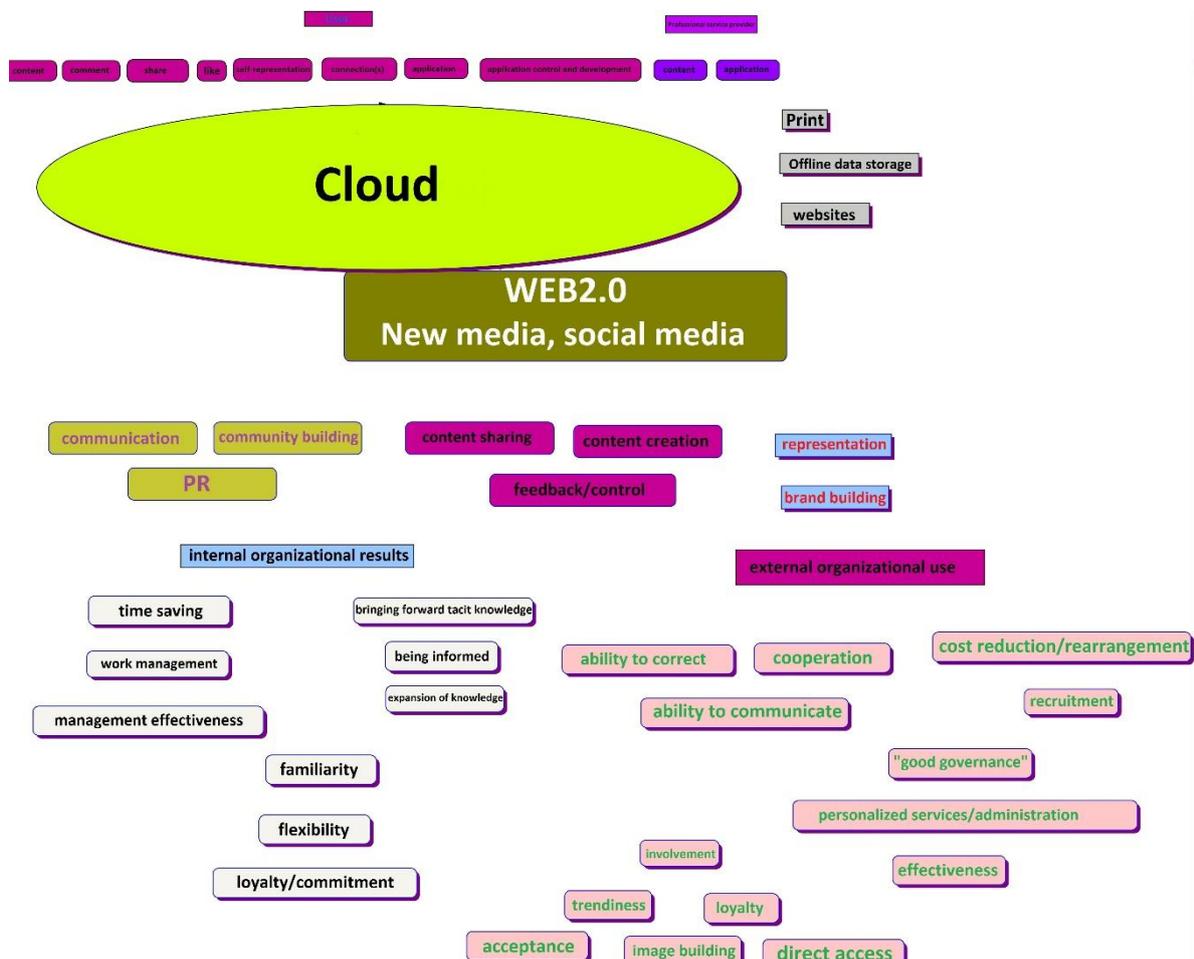
# Organizational communication in the world of new media

György Fábri

## Introduction

The terms „new media” or „web 2.0” became the most commonly used expressions in information gathering, media, and marketing these past 4-5 years. These words and the function they are covering, didn't even exist a couple of decades ago. In other words, we are trying to summarize a methodology for the use of organizational managements that hasn't developed itself to its fullest potential. There are no routine pathways to start with, and tried-and-true solutions are barely interpretable. However, it is crucial to get connected, which requires significant resources and the restructuring of the organizational environment.

The development of such a brand new communications field is an unprecedented situation in the history of management. However, there are a lot of internal inconsistencies in this situation. If we try to explain the elements of new media in the general context of communication, we save ourselves from clueless acceptance, and following trends blindly. At the turn of the new millennium, the world of internet taught us that it is useful to have a healthy amount of doubt when we see a „solution” to



our problems that is believed to be ultimate.

### Illustration of the topic

## The characteristics of the development and use of new media

### New media/web 2.0: morphology instead of definition

What is new media and why do we call it web 2.0? Are they the same? The term „web 2.0“ is connected to O'Reilly's presentation held in 2004, in which he described the newly forming internet world compared to the previous one in the past one and a half decade. The radical expansion of communication types became flagships of this world, which is a phenomena that later became one with new media itself.

„New media“ has been in use for the past two decades. Previously, it was meant to describe digital media in contrast to printed material. As computers, online websites, and digital televisions and media players became everyday tools, it was the turn of web 2.0 solutions to become new media.

### New content

The essence of web 2.0 can be summed up in developing and sharing content. However, due to users becoming content creators by writing blogs and adding comments, the gap between content providers and users becomes very thin, if not disappears. Such material becomes equally valuable compared to professional material, in terms of quantity and reading popularity.

With the help of social media sites, personal life and opinion become parts of published content, which is a topic that isn't widely researched yet. The nature and dynamics of connections made on social sites also carry information, as well as how people reflect on such connections (such as pressing the „Like“ button) or how one presents himself in a micro community. When we see widgets on our home screen, look at an RSS feed or check sites like Digg or Reddit, we receive more, reorganized information in general than if we looked at each piece of information separately. This process provides us with a broadening informational perspective.

Online contents become editable and less finalized. This isn't much of a problem in texts and pictures, however, in tools such as softwares and applications, they have to be able to run. The development of Linux-based operation systems became trends to follow during the time of web 2.0. As small groups of developers provide free applications, updates, and patches, it becomes more and more difficult to provide products of equal quality, and to manage long term product goals. It seems useless to keep products in beta-phases for a long time instead of going live, since updates can be implemented into already usable applications, based on users' feedback.

In today's world, the static nature of intellectual properties is strengthened by the copyright system. Open sources are becoming more popular, starting from computer programs and films to scientific articles and artistic performances. In this environment, we are talking about content values which are created based on trendy, autonomous norms (and against powerful positions such as scientific book publishers) defined by the public.

## New community

Another new thing is the incredible availability of contents as well as the expansion of its targeted audiences. Search engines are becoming better and more specialized. By linking online sources and „tagging“ people, anybody can run into our online presence. Furthermore, the probability of stumbling into something by accident grows exponentially. The basis of information gathering becomes how „webbed“ users are. We become parts and builders of an informational and activity network, which anybody can get caught in. Through this, the old-fashioned understanding of „target audience“ and informational/cultural community shifts into more plastic, suddenly forming reader as well as content provider groups.

The rapid expansion of online communities reform its basic roles. Nowadays, an information provider can rarely allow himself not to give the chance for users to express their opinion on topics. The most widespread way of participating in providing feedback on something is by liking and sharing. „Likes“ don't just improve availability and provide rating: we also look at the content along with how many people liked it. It also influences whether we will share it: more likes, higher probability of sharing.

Comments receive just as much attention as „official“ contents themselves, however, these are just small chunks of the web 2.0. Communities' roles in gathering information is much more relevant. When a community collects pieces of information on a certain topic and edits, updates, and controls it, they do nothing more than re-formulating material. The most visible results of such work are sites like Wikipedia. These content providers are unique entities of their own. They are examples of how common knowledge pushes original sources (cyclopaedias, monographies, and lecture material) to the background.

These mentioned above create a new form of social attitude: when we receive information, we become active by sharing, liking, commenting, and editing. These series of interactivities become the basis of community experience. Another aspect of such experience is knowledge content composed of smaller pieces, which can be individually developed, corrected, and even switched to something new (component based development). Owning such products is a different matter as well. Many people, sometimes strangers to each other, create and share them, therefore limiting access to material isn't an important motivating factor any more.

## New broadcasting environment

New contents and new communities constitute new media. This refers well to MacLuhan's quote: „Message is media itself.“ (MacLuhan, 1994) Even though it is useless to try to physically locate online contents, it is much easier to find them, and their authors. However, web 2.0 is a network of platforms that are created by users, therefore these change continuously as well.

New media types are indeed brand new: platforms we are considering natural to use nowadays didn't even exist a decade ago (Wikipedia started in 2001). Due to their new nature, they are considered innovative and encourage the development of web 2.0. However, this also makes it harder to conduct research. Quickly and efficiently developing projects such as Facebook, descending projects that contradict market expectations like iwiw and MySpace, and projects with yet unpredictable outcomes (LinkedIn) show the unexpected ups and downs of such market.

Specialties of new media are the use of language, vocabulary, and the rapid changes of writing styles. Slangs and bridge languages (lingua francas) don't connect to new media at all, however, this is the domain it spread the fastest. These languages aren't as rule-bound and sophisticated as it would be required by modern times' stylistics, however, the objection against this phenomena is quite weak,

and therefore shows the acceptance of such a wave. It is interesting to note the dominance of visual and metaphoric tools compared to plain texts. Reinforcing visual thinking after centuries of verbal expression not only changes our rhythm of understanding, but also gives new guidelines to users on how information should be managed and stated.

## The influence of new media: a life dominated by communication

The extreme overvaluing of communication, the presentation of contents instead of actions, and the dominance of virtual reality over real things are topics often criticized. These opposites however, don't consider the fact that people's effectiveness has evolved to such a high level when it comes to producing material goods, that they created plenty of room to enjoy immaterial ones. Due to this, products we use connect us more and more to communications which we spend more time doing, since it gives new found value to everything in the Western world.

### Communication and acting

The development of platforms and contents of new media are in sync with technological solutions. Visual and multimedia solutions require hardware resources that can only be reached with continuous updates and upgrades, which is a reinforcement for developers to create new contents and tools. This reciprocity brings us new stages of convergence. The current rule of tablets instead of netbooks seems like a stable state, but the trend in smartphone screen size growth may bring unpredictable outcomes.

One aspect is clear in the midst of technological reforms: the requirement of being online constantly. For long has it not been the question whether we can turn our cell phones off, but rather whether we can access social media platforms. Even those who turn down having continuous access to Facebook and emails, still demand the use of maps, as well as scholarly and entertaining applications. However, it is yet unseen, what the technological rivalry between mobile internet and WiFi may bring in the future.

It is clearly visible that modern technology interferes with trying to separate everyday activities. During the time of internet, it is getting harder to draw a wall between work and personal life, meaning that our coworkers become parts of our free time. It becomes untenable to arrange clear daily routines, since the boundaries of work time become flexible and less formal, due to the constant availability of and access to organizational information. People gave up their privacies in exchange for showing it off, therefore it is hard to interpret what it means to strictly separate and safeguard our private lives. Being seen and recognized is a big motivating factor of our everyday lives, and this motivation has moved from our personal lives to our office and work environment as well. The new reality created by new media is a fact every organization must take into consideration.

### Communication and thinking

In today's society, the routine of information reception is linear, meaning that from point A (a past event in our lives) we arrive to point B (the present) and continue on to C (in the future), an event that is influenced by multidimensional interpretations. The path of information represents this routine as well. Compared to this, the circular nature of web 2.0 and the differentiation of a transmitter and receiver is a system, much harder to interpret.

This type of communication rearrangement comes with the weakening of authority status. The classical characteristics of informational authority (such as those sharing their opinions in public who

are on TV and/or whose personal life is considered exciting) are available to anyone, however, anything can be shared about anybody as well. It is the basic thought of democratic communication systems, that knowledge isn't a hierarchic entity, and that liking, sharing, and the influence it is making on others, decides whether a content is relevant. However, this stage begins to question and weaken the authority of classic sources, like scholarly or charitable achievements.

Social media isn't the only domain where our ways of thinking is challenged. The existence of web 2.0 is an important factor in the decline of organizations. In Western cultures, people complain about fast changing environments ever since the first ambassadors of machine-driven transportation. However, with the ups and downs in new media happening suddenly (it can turn around in just a few years), it might not be necessary to do too much thinking ahead.

## New media and organizational communication

As organizations enter the world of new media, they experience that they are able to communicate with their partners and clients in a direct and fast way. At first, getting to know this new horizon brings us excitement, and later ambiguity. The use of external communications show that solid social media presence brings growth in success, effectiveness, and production. At first, social media sites seem like very goal-oriented and cost effective opportunities to communicate with targeted audiences, however, it is hard to keep transmitting an equally valuable brand image every time. Because of this, companies need to use more elaborated communication guidelines that were more common before the appearance of web 2.0.

## Social media marketing: what it can and cannot do

Social media channels aren't exclusively used by individuals: many organizations, institutions, product providers, and event organizers utilize them as well. Usually, the relations between social media and users are the most common aspects that are examined. However, with the presence of various competitor companies, it becomes easier to analyze these rivalries, and implement this knowledge into future strategies. The comparison of products and brands in personal communication channels seem less displeasing, according to the basics of marketing connections, than in more traditional channels. Furthermore, it is the opinion and experiences of the consumer rather than the company that influence the brand and its product, which can become a double edged sword. (Ramsaran-Fowdar-Fowdar, 2013).

## Functions and access

Organizations establish group sites where they can keep personal contact with a group of people organized around a common interest. On the other hand, the presence of companies might cause revulsion. According to research, users might feel that organizations invade their privacies, which might lead to inactivity or even quitting the group (Ramsaran-Fowdar-Fowdar, 2013). On the contrary, Fogel and Nehmad (2009) conclude that users are clear with the fact that their personal details are not entirely safe in the domain of social media, however, they still take the risk and participate in it.

In order to form a positive image of themselves, organizations need to stay in constant contact with their clients on social websites. This type of communication cannot become one-sided though. If so,

the presence of a company won't be more than a traditional marketing channel, which lost all the functions social media had been able to provide.

### Less and more successful communicating techniques

The opinion and experiences of the consumers rather than the company's way of communicating influence the brand and its product positively, which confirms the power of the word of mouth. First, users use „word of mouth” by liking, commenting, and Facebooking which is very popular nowadays. The best way for companies to gain public opinion and keep clients on the long term is by being referred and recommended by family members and friends. However, it is impossible to influence or measure this important factor with traditional marketing tools. Due to its nature, information on Facebook spreads based on recommendation, and part of it can be measured. The rate of information spreading is measured by the virality rate of posts.

Altogether, trust and personal recommendation in the environment of Facebook is more valuable than any other marketing tools. On the contrary, it doesn't matter how favorable advertising opportunities are on Facebook, the majority of marketing budget shouldn't be spent on these types of ads. This is especially true for product marketing. According to research, neither organizational nor user based content increased the rate of connectedness or the willingness to purchase a specific product. Social media is able to develop and maintain brand loyalty, as well as to present the quality of organizations, products, and supplies which might lead consumption trends towards a positive attitude. If neither advertising, nor content is able to generate enough trust in consumers, then the key to success lies in the degree of convincing users to self-generate news about specific products.

### Cost effectiveness

At first, it seems like the use of new media applications in communications decrease PR and marketing costs, which might be true in the case of traditional marketing related costs. Old-school communication costs have decreased, furthermore, tools such as newspaper ads can be avoided completely. It might also happen, that customer service will be completely replaced by web 2.0 platforms. However, this might cause a reorganization of funds rather than a clear decrease in costs. Instead of mailing printed material and purchasing news ads, the development and maintenance of blogs and social platforms costs just as much, if not more, since it requires a lot of strategic planning as well. Organizations gain access to more opportunities to develop and maintain connections with consumers than if they were to use phones, e-mails, and meetings (Luke, 2009). However, it is important to remember that knowledge and regularity is a must in order to use social networks effectively for marketing purposes. The re-thinking of marketing strategies and the restructuring of costs associated with these are more budget friendly than decreasing the number of PR staff associated with this department.

Being present on the internet requires a lot of investment of resources, therefore we should expect success proportionately to this. A study however, highlighted that 65% of companies using Facebook didn't notice any increase in their income. This statement has to be elaborated by adding that 39% of them didn't have enough data to appropriately analyze their investment return ratios. The study also pointed out that the majority of successful ventures have social media strategies, and an individual department dedicated to run it.

## Communication possibilities with web 2.0

As you can see, the use of social media for communications and marketing purposes carries a lot of advantages such as decreasing costs, personalized and guided information providing, immediate reinforcement from users, „word of mouth” recommendations, and the influence of user behavior. On the other hand, users might not take notice of commercials and ads directed towards them, and might even quit groups that advertise too much. Issues might arise from the use of personal information as well. Furthermore, as of right now there is no method to properly measure the investment return ratios of time, effort, and money devoted into web 2.0 marketing.

## Connections between marketing strategies and web 2.0

On most social media platforms users make their areas of interest public to a certain level (this is most obvious in the case of Facebook), which is an unlimited source to identify target groups and examine consumer trends. Every action of the user appears on news feeds, which can be either public or only visible by friends. However, with marketing research, we have to take into consideration that information shared by users might not be true. Even though platforms such as Facebook, Google, and Youtube dismiss the anonymous use of internet to a certain level, due to the limited controllability of the World Wide Web, people are still able to say whatever they want.

In order to segment and choose markets accordingly, the most useful pieces of information will be harvested from user groups. Every member's profile, news feeds and updates will become visible to other members within a community. The amount of data as well as its details will make the detailed exploration of expectations and attitudes easier.

## Communication policies in web 2.0

Personalized and targeted commercials or information packages provide help in reaching and convincing users. This creates a transition between traditional advertising and personal sales. Even though commercials cannot be designed around an individual's interest, it is possible to target these ads towards very specific groups of people. The advantage of social media ads and announcements are that you can set them up based on areas of interest and not just demographics, all at a reasonable cost. Once the campaign is launched, advertisers receive accurate statistics on how many users have had access to it, which can only be roughly approximated in the case of traditional marketing channels. Furthermore, the organization will receive valuable feedback from users themselves. Nonetheless, it isn't traditional advertising and information campaigns that bring the most success in social media, especially Facebook.

Besides operating with a friendly and casual tone, which is key to gain and keep followers, the Facebook platform is able to advertise a product without actual commercials. Two types of such methods are presented.

Marketing strategies such as electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and consumer's online brand related activities (COBRAs) are based on the success of unwritten tradition. In order to start a campaign, organizations need to investigate the areas of interests of users' part of their Facebook groups.

EWOM campaigns include every opinion and review, regardless of whether they are negative or positive, received from every past, present or future client and partner, which are visible to the public. During this campaign, organizations are trying to get their consumers to provide positive feedback on some kind of product in front of the public. This might happen by simply asking buyers

to rate a certain product, but it may also include the involvement of consumers. A constantly available, immediately reacting, problem solving online customer service, which gets its good reputation based on consumers, is a good example of eWOM. Even though eWOM campaigns don't necessarily include raffles, in most cases there is an opportunity to rate products.

In the case of COBRAs, organizations have to encourage group members to self-generate relevant, group-interest appropriate contents about products. The way this is handled can only be limited by imagination. In order to raise awareness and improve activity, users are often involved in some kind of a raffle. It is quite common to ask shoppers to take and upload a picture of themselves with the product, and share it with as many acquaintances as possible. Participants with the most shares may get valuable prizes. Organizations gain many new followers as well as deepen brand loyalty in already existing customers. It is important though that the advertised content must be related to the organization. Many companies make mistakes by making advertisements with animals or children, even though they would like to sell something completely unrelated to that. If the company is transmitting the wrong message, they might be seemingly successful with regards to the number of likes, however, they will probably not reach any other goals.

### Renewing community relationships

The use of public relations (PR) is widely known. Through this, one can form a positive image of an organization in public opinion and consumers' eyes. PR has a huge influence on professional market relationships and labor markets, therefore its significance in marketing communication steadily increases. Its tools may include event organization and keeping in touch with written media, spreading printed material, and organizing public appearances. However, the appearance of new media leads to changes in this domain as well. PR has an easier access to communities. Organizational methods become more effective, since it is easy to create a group invitation in social media, and it is easy to analyze the level of interest, based on the amount of replies as well. However, the development of good communication methods such as crisis management strategies are becoming essential. Organized presence in social media is a must during a bigger campaign, which requires almost non-stop staff availability. However, the organization's unified and positive image has to be kept together, even in the midst of trepidity.

### Guidelines for using social media in external communication

Against all uncertainties, more and more organizations use social media to achieve communication goals, and through their examples, instructive facts can be stated.

- Already existing, faithful partners are willing to connect to an organization's social website. However, it isn't just connecting, but the organization's effective communication skills are factors that reinforce loyalty and the intent to purchase.
- Successful new media marketing depends on whether the organization can appear to be as informal as if it was the client's friend. Closeness and friendliness create the basics of trust. Relevant information has to be provided in a way that it doesn't compare to traditional sales techniques at all.
- Friendliness doesn't mean the easing up of privacy policy guidelines. Users share a lot of personal information on the organization's website. However, abusing and misusing such information can ruin the entire fan base's trust in a few minutes.

- The misbelief, that successful media campaigns are merely based on the amount of likes and followers, has to be dispersed. Even though these do indeed increase the visibility of a company, unconcerned Facebook fans will rarely become real partners, unless they are occupied by the organization's communication. Anyone can buy countless amounts of likes for a small sum of money nowadays, therefore this data really biases the bigger picture. Real success can only be achieved with good content and communication.

## Implementing the use of new media as an internal communications network in light of increasing knowledge and performance

Web 2.0 is based on encouraging users to create content, and to make it public. Since this is a basic environment for people outside the organizational-institutional world, they are aware of its effects on motivation. Because of this, if they encounter the same effect within a company, it will motivate them to be similarly active.

This is the basis of social media usage models within organizations, which renewed the internal workings of companies in multiple dimensions.

### Visibility

Workers' behavior, knowledge, preferences, and social networks are becoming more visible due to the tools in new media. When people sense that accessing information is hard or they don't know whether a piece of information is accessible to them, they won't start searching for it. Social media tools make it possible to gain information on someone without much effort and energy. Posts and blog entries are visible to anyone who is part of the system. It is quite different from traditional tools such as emails or instant messages, which add to making information visible as well, however, not in such a way as what social media is capable of.

While using social media applications, visibility may cause changes in three aspects.

#### - Workplace behavior

Efimova and Grudin (2008) interviewed 34 IBM employees, who felt that blogging helped them in communicating with their coworkers more directly. Another research reinforced the fact that new technologies help in communication and in sharing work-related matters, regardless of organizational boundaries. Other researchers shared their results which showed that the most often shared contents in messages were internal company news in Yammer. The use of Wikipedia encouraged informal collaborations and supported knowledge sharing between employees.

#### - Metaknowledge

Social media may provide metaknowledge on a specific person within the organization, and on what he might know. DiMicco, Geyer, Millen, Dugan, and Brownholtz's (2009) research on the Beehive application at IBM concluded that coworkers mainly inquired about each other's backgrounds, areas of interest and activities. Shami, Ehrlich, Gay, and Hancock's (2009) research showed that people tend to turn for information more often to those who have a social networking profile. They felt that social media users have wider knowledge in their area of expertise, and are more likely to answer their questions as well.

#### - Organizational activity

According to 11 Twitter users of an IT company, „microblogging helps them to see what’s in other's minds through having access to tweets by workers of the organization.”

### Fixedness, retrievability, constancy

While using and posting onto a blog or a social networking service, upon logging out, information doesn't disappear: it will remain available to users. However, in the case of a video conference, a conversation is fixed in time, and whatever participants can recall, will be remembered and used.

Fixedness provides help in transferring more complex thoughts. By recording a previous conversation, it becomes possible to understand it better as well as to contextualize information more accurately. If a supervisor's instructions received through instant messaging are not clear to an employee, he has no other choice but to ask the supervisor himself. However, if he received these instructions through a system such as a microblog or an email, he may look through the original conversation. Since information sticks in these domains, a later user may look at the original conversation and edit it with useful information.

We may observe its effect on organization in three areas:

#### - *Maintenance of knowledge*

Contents' fixed nature and storage make it possible for individuals to contribute to technological innovations as well as have access to material on a long term. Research proves that while using Wikipedia, individuals were able to cooperate with each other for long periods of time, in an asynchronous form.

Users prefer to use new media to re-use and share material. However, they are less likely to use these tools to discuss content. Tools such as Wikipedia might come in handy in the case of ad hoc projects (such as during the time of an organizational crisis) because they create information in a centralized and subsidiary form, with the possibility of researching previous versions. The use of Wikipedia was documented during hurricane Katrina: it provided information regarding evacuation and later, re-building quickly. Four days after Katrina hit, on average one million people accessed search engines daily and posted information on missing people (Katrina People Finder Project), federal aids, and so on.

#### - Establishment of the reinforced forms of communication

When information and communications are fixed, contents may become recycled and newly interpreted, which provides an opportunity to refine thoughts, make them more useful and more robust. Under this term I mean that content will be hard to destroy, to compromise, and to lose.

Social media makes it possible to recycle organizational contents. A study conducted at IBM showed that employees were more likely to re-use a presentation sent out through an internal social networking system than if it came from the outside. Recycling contents also improves internal connections within an organization. According to an IT company, newly hired employees like to use social media in order to gain access to sources and information.

#### - Increasing volume of contents

The enormous amounts of information raise the problem that individuals will not be able to handle them after a while, therefore stop using the application.

## Editability

The fact that users invest a lot of time and energy into forming and re-forming their communication actions before making it available to others, has been analyzed extensively. Editability stems from two aspects of interaction: firstly, communication happens in an isolated and asynchronous way, for example in the case of a teleconference, when people see each other physically, as well as each other's reactions. On the other hand, editability refers to changing and re-editing already published contents as well. As an example, if we mistype something in an email, we don't have too many options in correcting it once it is sent. However, in Wikipedia, blogs and instant messages, we are able to correct mistakes. A later user might not ever know that a mistake has happened in the past. We can say that the editor is able to maintain a certain level of control over originally published content.

Editability influences behavior in three aspects

- Regulates natural self-expression

Editability makes it possible to allow user to manipulate information one wishes to share.

- Directed content

Studies show that social media users aim their messages at specific communities. Since the level of control over editing is high, creators may release posts at specific times or rearrange content based on feedback received from the community.

- Increase in the quality of information

Social media allows to edit and review contents, even after it has been shared. The free editing of Wikipedia makes it possible to control contents made by others, which was not available in previous technology.

## Connectedness

There are two types of these: the first one is between two individuals, which is usually called a „social tie”, such as a friend in our social network or following a blog. The individuality of social networks stands in the user's ability to articulate and make his connections visible, rather than meeting strangers.

Another type of connection is the individual's connection to a piece of information such as Wikipedia or blog comments. These connections are often considered as individual initiatives, however, in the case of social media, platforms themselves recommend further connections (for example, recommendations made in Facebook or bookmarks in Delicious).

- *Supporting social connections*

Social media makes it possible for users to make their connections explicit. DiMicco, Geyer and colleagues' (2009) analysis on the internal social networking services of IBM found that employees use these tools to get in touch with those who they are not entirely familiar with in the organization. They also found that there is less social networking activity within immediate and close coworkers. This is contradictory to usage in non-organizational environment.

New connections between people and content may have an influence on the improvement of social capital in the case of individuals. Furthermore, it gives a chance to form bigger communities. Jackson et al. (2007) interviewed organizational microblog users and found that even when connections are not labeled as „friends”, users still felt closer to the company.

#### - Access to relevant material

Because of connections to information, organizations may benefit from sharing knowledge of experts. Social media is capable of improving content with useful and quality information as well as making source connections explicit.

#### - Opportunity to form relationships

Features of social media such as rankings or recommendations contribute to the spreading of existing and the initiation of new connections. Easy use of technology provides more chances for relevant interactions between people and contents.

## Knowledge management in new media

All these characteristics significantly influence and shape the main elements of communication processes: socialization, knowledge sharing, and power relations.

### Socialization

Within the aspect of socialization, using social media might have a contradicting effect on the organization's formal socializing intentions, which is mostly based on strict, controlled pieces of information. As an example, fixedness, which provides an opportunity to note and review communication logs, may conflict with the information timing efforts of the company.

*Searching information:* it makes especially newcomers' lives easier.

*Establishing connections:* there is an opportunity to find coworkers with similar areas of interest, which is especially advantageous for new employees. Connecting that is made possible by social media gives a chance to practice social influence. Wattal and colleagues (2009) found that leadership's use of media is in correlation with the participation of employees. People like to make connections with knowledgeable experts or highly recognized individuals, regardless of whether they would like to interact with them.

### Knowledge sharing

With regards to knowledge sharing, organizations always raised the question: how can they catch and use the essence of their employees' tacit (implicit, not articulated, not used) knowledge? The visibility characteristic of social media gives the chance for tacit knowledge to become explicit. It made it possible to show personal information in a public environment, to surface the small details of routines and know-hows. Huh and colleagues' (2007) study with IBM's BlogCentral platform reinforced that people express their tacit knowledge through blogs. Writing an open paper on their job responsibilities stimulated them to articulate precisely how they executed a task. Another analysis showed that the pursuit of recognition might indicate why people phrased their messages to appear smart and knowledgeable, even if it doesn't exactly cover reality.

Because of visibility, supervisors will have the opportunity to identify competence in individuals. Through this, more precise projects can be assigned, which will improve the groups' performance altogether.

Connections also help with identification: social media gathers activities and contents based on their similarities, therefore establishes the community of well-informed people. One's rating of the other may indicate expertise in the group. Stepping over organizational boundaries becomes possible. It

often happens that people from different organizations have a hard time understanding each other, since their work ethics and vocabulary are different. Social media's visibility may conquer this obstacle as well.

	<i>Catching the essence of tacit knowledge</i>	<i>Contribution motivation</i>	<i>Stepping over organizational boundaries</i>	<i>Identifying professional expertise</i>
Visibility	How does knowledge appearing in social media reflect workers' tacit knowledge?	Will growing visibility encourage access to knowledge?	May it result the better understanding of other group's work?	Does it add to the more precise identification of professional expertise?
Fixedness	Will low quality conversations prevent the initiation of further conversations?	Is there a level to big quantity contents which might deter users from commenting?	Does the discovery of old content have enough effect on individuals to motivate them to aspire for mutual understanding in the „here-and-now“?	Will the finding of old documents shed light onto who is a professional and who isn't, and will this change present interactions?
Editability		Under what circumstances do people change their old comments? What influence does this have on organizational knowledge?	In case of finding an earlier, not appropriate piece of info, may one edit content in a way that results in a more generalized organizational knowledge?	Will people live with hoaxes in editing in order to change others perception regarding where professional knowledge can be found within an organization?
Connections	How do connections based on recommendations turn tacit knowledge into explicit?	Are social or task-oriented communications encouraged?	How does it make external work group connections easier?	How does it shape and support professional groups?

#### **Dilemmas regarding the influences of social media in organizations**

#### Positions of power

With regards to power and organizational communication, three aspects are discussed in literature: source dependency, discursive construction, and supervision.

Knowledge means potential power for an individual in an organization. By making information visible due to social media, individuals may signal that they have skills. If the community finds this knowledge valuable, it might be the individual's power source which results in higher influence in

decision making processes. Analysis of social media prove that it can stabilize, as well as distribute power. Because of its visibility, it might have an equalizing effect on accessing knowledge.

Social media connections make it possible for individuals not to depend on certain people so much within an organization. Independently of time and location, employees may broaden their networks and build social capital by stepping over boundaries. Through these connections, we may reach out to supervisors and company heads which might otherwise be very hard, decreasing the role of „bouncers“ who control entry to these people.

Social networks, due to visible texts, may be considered a discourse platform where people have a chance to make statements and participate in public discussions. With regards to this, researchers are interested in finding out more information on how everyday language shapes and maintains ideologies, and how people with power marginalize other forms of discourse in order to maintain their positions. Using media in an organizational community proves that due to the visibility of contents, employees have the feeling that they know what is happening at the company. Those groups and individuals, who are able to form a Discourse (capital D) and participate in social media, might be able to exercise power over the narratives on the use of social media. Furthermore, they might be able to guide the Discourse, which controls perception within an organization. However, the informal nature of being present in social media might encourage open communication and make the dominance of discourse harder.

Due to its connecting nature, normative pressure might be on individuals in order to conform (for example supervisors ignoring minor comments, therefore marginalizing them).

In closing, it shouldn't be forgotten that new technologies provide a new opportunity to observe employees. Due to its fixedness, checking upon them became easier, since information is stored, collected, and searchable.

### The disturbing „noise“ of social media and multitasking

While analyzing internal organizational blog usage, researchers encountered a paradox besides all the positive effects. Even though the goal is to have employees contribute to knowledge, the more the contributions, the harder it is to find specific pieces of information. Fixedness, which is a characteristic of social media, might result in a time when information „noise“ is heavier than valued additions. Since social media supports connecting, the motivation of content contributions will mainly increase social connections, and will not necessarily add to the increase of organizational knowledge.

The issue of multitasking connects here. Activity and attention spent „inside“ social media doesn't require loud and different tools other than normal work equipment. There is continuous research examining as to what extent shared attention and constant presence in the online world help or set back focused work performance and productivity. It seems sure that the usage of media routines are not yet fully formed, therefore common sense is essential to find compromises during certain organizational activities (meetings, working in front of a screen, etc.).

### Closing thoughts: the future of web 2.0 starting from today

As we can see, the communicational and institutional-organizational phenomenon known as web 2.0 is constantly forming and taking shape right now, with us being observers as well as partners in this process. Because of this, the most preferably acquired knowledge and attitude cannot be anything

else but openness and preparedness to yet unseen changes. Obviously, this is true to almost every aspect of our postmodern times. However, new media has one more characteristic that differentiates it from the rapidly changing world of readymade products and solutions. Namely, we ourselves create web 2.0 solutions. Our innovation, participation, opinions, content making and distributing powers form the world of web 2.0

The momentum of new media's future cannot be thanked to internet-gurus or the leaders of the industry. Tendencies rooting deep in the structures of society and economy explain the underlying mechanisms of social media and online user activity.

First, we shall observe the demographic fact that today's young generation, who grow up in social media, and their lifestyles, relationships, and informational routines form in this environment as well, naturally require and use these platforms in their later years as well. There is no turning back to one-way, centralized informational monopolies. They are socializing in a multicentered, non-institution bound way of information utilization, therefore their workplace operations and expectations towards institutions and offices are directed towards more interactive services, administration, and partnerships.

Besides sociodemographic definiteness, social and cooperation practices, which connect tightly to the use of social media, become too ordinary:

- target groups, laymen, and consumers become better informed due to the access to knowledge and the horizontal nature of information sharing
- the ratio and role of creative content makers in the job market who not only wish financial recognition but visibility and appreciation from their respective environments
- informal learning from coworkers and peers become equivalent to formal learning; besides schools and courses, the third environments of learning are the communities of practice
- hierarchy is replaced by organization based on networks
- non-linear innovation models gain more headway, in which users not only provide feedback at the end of the process but rather throughout the entire way

Besides these sociological processes, we observe a seemingly subjective factor, which influences our everyday lives, our consumer as well as career decisions, and social choices: the motivational force of trends (aligning with styles, common conceptualizations, and so on). This general phenomenon is becoming more prevailing, since new media is trend itself. It is not surprising that its entire operation flows in the aspects of trendiness. Its internal solutions and value system favors hyped (often by manipulation) contents. The idea of trends may be interpreted on a very broad spectrum: visited sites, downloaded applications, likes, and shares materialize as well as shape interest and identification.

These don't mean that the road to the progression of new media would be straight, free of contradictions and discontinuities. Uncertainties transpire user experience as well as application solutions, and business life cycles and perspectives of platforms. Within these, the seemingly low costs (even no costs) of content making is especially important. The development of original knowledge and information costs a lot of money, which is usually provided by some kind of a community (educational institutions, research or cultural facilities) or by the consumer by using the product. However, the withdrawal of governments from these regions and the cost-free nature of social media are two aspects that really constrict such resources. Conflicts may arise from the fact that social media users waive their rights to practice freedom of decision making: the majority of

social media members hand over information and tracking of their lives, habits, connections and relationships, values, and whereabouts to virtually anyone such as big data gathering and analyzing organizations.

In summary, web 2.0's system level basic experience is its unplannable nature, which comes hand-in-hand with a communicational-cultural shift that's effect and depth is yet unknown. Civil service institutions, financial firms as well as decision makers all have to count on this, since the inner routines of their employees and people who connect with them depends on this level of socialization in new media. Naturally, progression in new media isn't necessarily positive or welcomed. However, their effect on managing strategies and tasks is unavoidable, just as its influence the manager's life. The environment of web 2.0 shouldn't be treated as a hostile, incomprehensible bubble. On the contrary, our activity should be suited to the preference of our institutions and services. Through this, we ourselves become the present and future of web 2.0, and this is how we can utilize, and make the present and future of new media our own.

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