

SOCIAL PSYCH TASK 9

RAMONA SOARES

Attributions and Cognitive Dissonance

- i. Selena is currently going for a run, taking the same route she always does. Running past the same mailboxes, driveways, and trees, she is feeling unconfined and free.
She turns a corner, into Pavlov St, a path in her route. Moments later, she hears footsteps behind her, following a pace similar to hers – except the footsteps landed on the floor heavier, more forceful. *It's a man.* The second she realizes this; her breathing picks up as her heart begins palpitating. Thoughts of the potential danger she's in sprint in her mind, activating her fight or flight response. In this case, her mind freezes whilst her body remains at a steady pace. Terrified, her head looks back to confirm her assumptions. *It's true.* Her head flicks back, focusing on the path ahead as her mind scrambles on, desperately trying to understand the behaviour of the man.
Her breath hitches, hearing the man pick up his pace. This is it. He's going to do something to me. This is the fate she believed would happen to countless girls who were at the wrong time and place. With her mind busy going over and repeating self-defense moves, she tries to pick up her pace – but fails. Loud breaths escape her mouth as she prepares for the worst. She feels him inches away from her, eyes locked to the left side of the path to get a better view of him. The man speeds, taking over her – making her forget how to breathe.
In less than ten seconds, he's meters away and ahead of her. Her breathing comes to a steady speed as her legs slowed, eventually coming to a stop. Following dispositional attribution, Selena is relieved that her assumptions regarding the man's motives was wrong. With low consensus, consistency and high distinctiveness, external attribution is the likely attribution for this scenario.

Continuing her run, Selena sees another woman running on the opposite side of the road. A man tails a few meters behind the other woman. In just a few seconds, he catches up to the other woman, mere inches behind her feet. Selena identifies the potential danger the woman could be in, seeing her frightened face – similar to the one she had earlier. Selena would describe herself as cautious and good-natured, but she did not step in to help the

other woman as she thought the other woman would simply be overtaken – like she was.

Group polarisation

- ii. A global event that is a real-life example of group polarization involves the physical damage to furniture, places and people after the loss of a football game – more specifically, this year's Euros finals. Group polarisation is present in the behaviour of people supporting England's football team in the 2021, Euros. A vast gathering of those supporters were in public places like bars. With "increased alcohol consumption and strong emotions associated with the game... abuse is increased in both severity and frequency" (Farah Nazeer, Chief Executive of Women's Aid, 2021). That quote alone illustrates the extreme verbal and physical violence that occurred.

Addressing the physical violence, those who did not get tickets stormed Wembley Stadium in an attempt to get in. A volunteer outside the Webley told the Independent, "There were thousands that... broke through. It looked so coordinated as it happened in one big move", mirroring the social comparison theory. This theory describes people changing their minds to simply conform with group norms in order to gain acceptance. Being in public bars, the people took a position of violence that was similar to others but slightly more extreme.

Another theory that explains this behaviour is the self-categorization theory. This theory fits in with the aggressive behaviour displayed by the football fans as they identify with a particular group (England's football team) and conformed with a prototypical group position that is more extreme than the group mean, hence the rough outrage. The outrage involved damage to furniture, streets, roads and physical assaults to others including a child and Asian man.

Many believed England's loss was due to unsuccessful penalty kicks taken by black football players. As a result, a large group of English fans took violence to the next level, actively seeking out black individuals to be victims of their hate. This racism took life into the media, with plenty of fans expressing their hate towards the black football players and the black community in general.

Psychological evidence regarding group polarisation was the Bishop and Myers study. It was discovered that when high-prejudiced students discussed racial issues, they became more prejudiced. This is evident in the real-life example provided above as hate crimes, especially towards black people increased rapidly. Maccoby (2002) also found distinct gender differences, with boys playing more aggressively than girls. This applies to English football supporters as those involved in violent attacks were mostly men.

To evaluate Bishop and Myers, their study was ethnocentric as their sample were primarily from Western culture. This makes their study difficult to

generalize across all cultures. However, an advantage of their study is that they studied both male and females, avoiding androcentrism.

To conclude, views held by individual group members are enhanced through discussion, encouraging more people do join in their behaviour. In this case, the public setting of a bar allowed plenty of England's team supporters to express their views, gaining more support for their violent behaviour.

References

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