

Cognition in Social Context

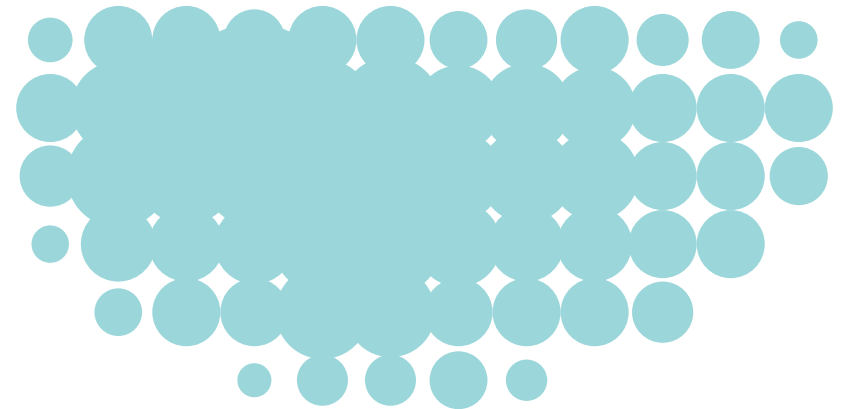


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Edition Cognitive Studies

fftu



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1. Preface. Introduction of Basic Terms

keywords: *society, social philosophy, social psychology, sociology*

1.1 Preface

The following textbook has been dedicated to the problem of cognition in social context, that is questions regarding what society is, why people communicate, why we socialize (and not only us, humans), what is the function of language in society, what is the role of laughter, emotions, etc.

The examination of these issues seems to be important for finding answers to questions regarding the broader interdisciplinary problems, such as mob behaviour, ideology, violence, genocide, war. Since it concerns topics that appear at the crossroads of multiple scientific disciplines — sociology, philosophy, political science, social psychology, cultural anthropology, and neuroscience, etc. — the selection and usage of methodological approaches related to different disciplines has been applied accordingly. Majority of the processed findings have been based on experimental research (especially in the field of contemporary neuroscience), which is aimed at identification of the causes and discovery of causal relations.

In the first chapter the reader will be introduced to basic concepts and disciplines that relate to the topic of cognition in social context — society, cognition, social cognition, social philosophy, social psychology, sociology, etc.

1.2 Society as a Term

The term *society* is etymologically related to the Latin term “societas”, which is translated as community, unity, fellowship, the verb *sociare* is translated as connect, associate, band together, accompany, share, take part. Adjective *socius* means joint, allied and noun *socius* can be translated as a species, companion, participant, or even an ally.

The term “society” can be, therefore, understood in various meanings:

- a group of individuals
- a set of social phenomena, the sum of relationships among people
- interdependent society — community
- humanity as a whole
- state
- organized community of people who reside in certain territory and are connected by cooperation
- a certain form or system of social relations
- a certain stage of human history development

As the term “society” is wide and used in many contexts, it is examined by a number of scientific disciplines.

1.3 Social Psychology

Social psychology — study of psychological aspects of human social interactions; Kenrick, Neuberg, and Cialdini defined the discipline as scientific research of the effect that people have on the mind, emotions and behaviour of other people. (Nakonečný, 2009) Social psychology has a dual focus — psychologically oriented social psychology examines the impact of social factors on individual psychological processes and sociologically oriented social psychology deals with the group processes as such, in which an individual acts as an element. (Nakonečný, 2009) As a result, sociological orientation focuses on the interaction between groups (small or large).

Social psychologist D.G. Myers defined the relationship between social psychology and sociology as follows — sociology enquires on how the different sized groups from couples to entire communities (culture, civilization) function; social psychology examines each individual as a member of a group that thinks of others and is subject to their influence; it analyzes both the influence of the group on the individual and the influence of the individual on the group. (Myers, 2005)

Although the focus of social psychology is to explore the individual, the system analysis is applied in the search for broader context — the concept of social behaviour in the family, at school, social, political and economic conditions, bullying, racism, terrorism and other socio-pathological phenomena.

1.4 Social Philosophy

Social philosophy — is a discipline of philosophy that reflects society and social life; often it is a theoretical reflection of the search for the possibility of a better world (social utopias, ideologies). Major topics of the socio-philosophical reflection of the society are justice, freedom, inevitability in social life and relationship between society and nature. Greek philosophy dealt mainly with the questions regarding “polis” and the State from the constitutional point of view, relations between individuals were not a common topic; in the same way medieval social philosophy rather addressed the wider context of society (state / church) than relationship between individuals; social behaviour was further analyzed by the philosophy in the Reformation period (for more on the historical philosophical survey of society see Chapter 2).

Today, the term *political philosophy* is used in addition to the concept of social philosophy, which is more narrowly specialized and its subjects are mainly institutional and social establishment analyses. The political philosophy according to J.Kis asks three types of questions:

- what is the proper institutional arrangements of the society
- what are standards to be used to assess social institutions
- how are these criteria used to select and confirm the preferred institutional arrangement? (Kis, 1997, 7)

Political and social philosophies are based on moral philosophy; they are looking for principles of the good and justice; as opposed to moral philosophy, they do not apply these principles to personal conduct, but to the impersonal institutions, conventions and traditions. Highlights of every age bring questions and suggestions for finding the answers in this area (for example, research on anti-Semitic attitudes after World War II by T.Adorn, or Arendt's definition of totalitarianism after World War II).

1.5 Sociology

In the first half of the 19th century a new discipline of science appeared on the scientific scene having the study of society directly in its name — sociology. This term has appeared thanks to A. Comte, the French philosopher, who was not satisfied with the traditional philosophy or psychology. He considered them too speculative, metaphysical and overly introspectional. Comte mentioned the term sociology in his monumental *Course on Positive Philosophy* (6 volumes). Comte is also the author of the traditional division of sociology into social statics and social dynamics. Comte perceived sociology as the philosophy of history. He analyzed it in three stages — theological, metaphysical and positivistic, whereby he included his own positivistic vision of the society. In the theological stage, human spirit focuses on the intrinsic nature of being, the first and the last causes ... literally on the absolute knowledge. (Comte, 1998) In the metaphysical stage, according to Comte, supernatural agents are replaced by abstract forces, or essences. In the positive stage, human spirit realizes that absolute knowledge cannot be acquired; it abandons the search for origin and purpose of the universe, as well as knowledge of the inner causes of events

to pursue the discovery of their true laws, i.e. their permanent relations of succession and similarity. (Comte, 1998) Comte's sociology does not reflect only the state, legal and social development, but also the development of art, religion, science and philosophy. He divided sociology into two parts:

- theory of natural arrangement (social statics) — reflection on institutions that provide the balance of society (religion, family and state)
- theory of progress (social dynamics) — already mentioned law of three stages.

Sociology is currently defined as a discipline that deals with the examination of social entities, social processes and relations between them.

Recommended literature

- BARON, R. A. — BYRNE, D.: *Social Psychology*. Allyn and Bacon, 2000.
 AUGOUSTINOS M., WALKER, I.: *Social cognition*. SAGE Publications Ltd., 2006.

2. Historical Context

keywords: *natural state, justice, freedom, utopia, free market*

The following chapter focuses on the understanding of society in the history of philosophy. The topics of society, its origins, features, function, relationship of a human and the society, etc. are some of the central problems of social philosophy since Plato's predecessors. Philosophers across history have sought answers to questions on how society is created, why is it created, what is justice, what are the functions of society, what is freedom, what is the best social order, does "natural state" even exist, etc.

2.1 Concept of Society in Ancient Times

According to Plato, society was formed so that people gradually socialized with the aim of simplifying their lives by division of labour. Collectivist measures prevailed in his concept; he believed in the complete unity of the community. A leader — philosopher should be at the head of the community, other classes of state are the guardians — auxiliaries and the third class consists of peasants and artisans. Plato did not consider the family as an essential and fundamental unit of the society; on the contrary, for the good of the polis it is better if children are educated by officers, men and women have children according to predefined rules and do not live in common households. (Plato, 2003)

Plato's pupil Aristotle perceived society differently. His socio-philosophical concept was influenced by the political situation in Greece at that time:

- the age-long political fragmentation of Greece into separate communities
- economic development (development centres are transformed into city-states — polis)
- fading power of kings and rise of timocracy

While working on his treatise *Politics*, Aristotle studied constitutions of 158 Greek poleis.

According to him, man is by his nature a political animal — *zoon politicon*. To maintain and improve his life, he needs company of other living beings. Fundamental units of the society, according to him, are family and community, where a man and a woman form families, and these families form a community. But the municipality itself cannot provide everything one requires, so there must be a state. *State*, according to Aristotle, is a community of free and equal people with varying degrees of power share. Perfect community is a state, which is made up of several communities. Aristotle rejected Plato's view that absolute unity is essential for a good life of community.

2.2 Social Philosophy in Christian Middle Ages

In the Christian Middle Ages Aristotle's teachings prevailed in addition to the authority of Holy Scriptures and Church fathers. St. Thomas Aquinas, who wrote commentary on *Politics*, followed these teachings, as well. St. Thomas Aquinas interprets man as *zoon politicon*, too. According to him, it is not possible for a man to be good, if he does not have a correct relation to the social good. The more virtue refers to the social good, the higher it is. He classified virtues into **natural** — prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance — as a basis of **natural law** (*lex naturalis*), which reflects **eternal law of God** (*lex aeterna*). Above them there are three divine,

theological virtues — **faith, hope and charity** — that come from God's grace. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, there must be something regulating the number of people. With a large number of people, and the efforts of individuals acting selfishly for their private interest, human society would come apart, if there was no one who would care about the common good, the same as the human body, if there was no common guiding force in it. Hence, the necessity of authority. He had an idealistic vision of monarchy, where the rule of the king is a reflection of divine rule. The worst form of government, according to him, is tyranny. The role of state is to lead citizens to justice and virtue, the role of the church is to bring man to heavenly bliss, so its role is greater and nobler than the role of the state. In the concept of St. Thomas Aquinas the king is subordinate to the Pope; secular power is subordinate to spiritual power.

2.3 Machiavelli

The perceptions of the relation between spiritual and secular power developed in an entirely different manner in the aftermath of Christian Middle Age. An exemplary concept in this sense was Machiavelli's social philosophy. Niccolò Machiavelli, who lived and worked at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, was convinced that history and all "worldly affairs" as such are governed by man, and not God. History, according to him, is not one story that unfolds against the background of God's plan, rather a man should look for lessons, principles and laws that would contribute to a better administration of the country by governor and to the overall benefit of mankind. Machiavelli was directed to a practical application of the historical (and other) knowledge in the administration of the state. He expressed this attitude in his main treatise on social philosophy — *The Prince*. The Prince is required to primarily study history, because for his reign it is essential to obtain the so-called *historical consciousness*, so he is able to choose appropriate examples to follow and to know what to avoid. (Machiavelli, 2009)

In history, the political scene, according to Machiavelli, plays a privileged role — it is the political scene, which provides the course, in which the whole historical process moves.

The Prince, according to Machiavelli, should have the virtue — *virtù*, which is a kind of ability to act, a combination of will and talent. The society has been formed, according to Machiavelli, in a natural way (it was not some divine intervention) — the effort for self-preservation and higher quality of life have contributed to the formation of society. Machiavelli regarded religion as a natural phenomenon of social life and evaluates it in terms of usefulness for political purposes.

2.4 Utopias

At the same time as Machiavelli's ideas were born in Florence, new social philosophical system — utopia was born in England. Thomas More, who became famous due to eponymous work called *Utopia*, can be considered one of the most important founders of utopia. It is a satirical treatise, which portrays the dream of an equitable social order. The cause of suffering, according to utopians, is the private ownership — wherever the private ownership exists and everyone measures all things through money, it was hardly possible that the state was a fair establishment.

The ideal state should be based on a common property, a general and compulsory participation of all citizens in productive work. The aim of "utopians" (inhabitants of Utopia) is to provide not only material needs, but especially the free development of human personality.

In the 17th century John Locke contributed to the creation of a theoretical platform for **fundamental human rights**. According to Locke a **natural state** existed before the formation of society, which was a state of general equality, power and rights were reciprocal. Modern society does not have sufficient real evidence regarding the existence of natural state (love and needs united people

into society). Freedom in a natural state did not have the form of arbitrariness — an individual acted within the borders of **natural law**. Natural law is not written, it is not possible to find it outside the mind of people, it is clear and comprehensible to all rational beings; it does not deprive of freedom — it does not represent anything, which would not be public weal. The implementation of natural law is in the hands of everyone, everyone has the right to punish offenses against the law, and the penalty rate is determined by the gravity of the offense (and at the discretion of reason and conscience). The natural law, according to Locke, is being violated, because the perpetrator is governed by different rules than the sense and general decency (hereby he declares war on the whole of humanity). People in their idleness consider natural law inadequately and, therefore, there is a state of war, which requires the creation of a society, in which every member has the fundamental rights: the right to property, the right to life and to freedom. The guarantor of the rights is the community as a whole.

2.5 Enlightenment and Society

J. J. Rousseau (the 18th century) can be considered a sort of counterpart to Locke in social philosophy, as he also thematized the natural state. Individual in a natural state is free and independent; he becomes dependent on others through the formation of society. During the Enlightenment, the topic of society and course of history gets more to the forefront. For example, with J.G. Herder it is typical to feel enlightened optimism, rooted in the pervasive idea of progress, according to him, the company is the influential progressive framing of humanity, which is done through the genius of nations. For example, in the works of J.G. Herder the characteristic enlightened optimism can be sensed, rooted in the pervasive idea of progress; according to him, the society is under the influence of the gradual formation of humanity, which is accomplished through the genius of nations. Over the course of history the

humanity traverses through various cultural levels and transformations, while the basic platforms of progress are common sense and justice.

Immanuel Kant devoted some of his minor works to the topic of society (*Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose, Perpetual Peace*). Man, according to Kant, resides in two realms: the realm of nature (inevitability) and the realm of freedom. In the course of history man gradually started to be conscious of the future; thanks to senses man began to have certain expectations of future and gradually became aware that nature can be used to his advantage. At that time, when a man first realized that nature did not supply sheep with fur, but it was meant for a man to be clothed, he came to realization that man himself is the goal of the nature. The reason did not allow man to return back. Kant dealt with the human species, not an individual human, individual life is too short to fulfil the possibilities for heading towards progress. The aim of history and society, according to him, is in the formation of general civil society governed by law.

It is worth to mention the concept of Adam Smith, which influenced socio-political and economic thinking in the 18th century by his treatise *The Wealth of Nations*. This book by Smith was a kind of foundation stone for economy as a modern academic discipline. In his book Smith analyzed and advocated free market (also called the theory of the invisible hand of the market) — an idea that the state should not interfere in economic processes. The role of the state is to guarantee the observance of laws and contractual obligations. The most important aspect of economic life, according to Smith, is the division of labour.

Recommended Literature

DUNBAR, R.: *Grooming, Gossip and the Evolution of Language*. Harvard University Press, 1996.

BARON, R. A. — BYRNE, D.: *Social Psychology*. Allyn and Bacon, 2000.

3. An Individual in the Society. Kinship. Cooperation. Struggle for Recognition

keywords: *co-operation, thumos, isothymia, megalothymia, civilization*

The topic of the next chapter is an individual in the society, the problem of kinship and cooperation. Vast majority of authors in the field of social philosophy are of the opinion that the reason for the formation of society was co-operation (see Chapter 2). How come that co-operation could evolve in nature, when *acts of crookedness* are much more common?

3.1 “A Sentence for Sentence”

One of the answers is offered by computer models — for example, the “sentence for sentence” program. It is built on a simple principle — every opponent that could swindle can be forced into co-operation by making the first helpful step and subsequently we repeat every other step after our opponent — if he co-operates, we co-operate, if he swindles, we swindle, as well. (Koukolík, 1997) The presented model has its weaknesses — for the model to be functional the game should not have only one round, after which we would not meet our opponent again; in that case the most logical behaviour is to swindle and get lost. It is difficult to determine the level of remuneration for the swindle — it should not be too high in order not to destroy the relationship between opponents, nor too low, so that opponents get the impression that there is nothing to

play for. These principles apply, as stated by Koukolík, for business, marriage, and political relationships — for any type of relationship. (Koukolík, 1997). Of course, man is not the only a being that lives in a group that calls for cooperation. Koukolík describes behaviour of lions in a group — they hunt in a group, they bring up their cubs together and protect their territory against alien lions. Their cooperation is based on a relatively complicated model — they co-operate, if a great effort is required in order to catch a prey, if it can be obtained easily, they do not co-operate. Females nurse the cubs together, but in case of delay attack by male, they prefer to defend their own cubs first. Adult females live in groups of 3–6 members, but sometimes as many as 18 females group together.

Zoologists R. Heinsohn and C. Packer have examined the behaviour of female lions in case of threat to their common territory (Heinsohn, Packer, 1995).

They have discovered that some of the females fight for the group and themselves with no regard to the threat and crooked behaviour of their companions. Others co-operate only in case of real emergency and the reminders of the group are “swindlers”. Similar clashes for resources, territory or sexual partner among animals can be observed among human beings.

What happens to “swindlers” or so-called “social parasites”? Among human beings and animals there is usually some form of punishment for such behaviour; the punishment occurs in five social contexts:

- during the formation of superior/inferior relationships
- in the parasitic behaviour or theft
- during the development of sexual relationships
- in collisions between parents and children
- in the enforcement of co-operation

3.2 Kinship

Ordinary experience is sufficient for a man to find out that people behave in one way (both the man and higher vertebrates) with

own relatives and differently with those, who they are not related to. Kinship is one of the essential organizational principles of all societies — plants, animals, humans. Relatives share a part of their genes, and therefore, if a man wants to increase the chances for survival of our genes, it seems advantageous to help relatives. Helping does not mean inbreeding — for close relatives the interaction of destructive alleles, which are carried by every living organism, is highly probable. The usual result is affected offsprings. The negative genetic consequences can be present even in offsprings of genetically very distant parents. Therefore, a man produces offspring with individuals who are not genetically too close, nor too distant. (Koukolík, 1997)

The question is how to recognize a relative? For example, the bank swallow leaves the chicks that are unable to fly, in previously prepared corridors and therefore it feeds only its own offspring. When they learn to fly and they mingle with other groups, they produce characteristic sounds, by which their parents are able to recognize their own offspring. There is a variety of mechanisms for the recognition of own offspring from the others — e.g.: scent (wasps, bees, mice, humans — for example, see the experiment described by Koukolík, 1997, 108–109).

3.3 Cooperation

We still have not addressed the question regarding the development of cooperation in nature. J.M. Smith and E. Szathmáry described the evolution of life in eight stages — initially there were simple molecules that were able to replicate; they formed more complex and collaborative groups and became the basis for the development of molecules that are the carriers of heredity. These were not destroyed in their struggle for resources and then came the formation of bacteria, protozoa, two sexes and multicellular organisms, colonies, primates — which formed a man. Each evolution

level is more complex and contains more information than the previous one. (Koukolík, 1997).

It would seem that cooperation was the basis for evolution of all more complex life forms. If certain genes begin to multiply in a complex organism at the expense of entity, malignant tumour that destroys the body develops and without proper treatment the organism dies. It may be some sort of universal principle — the development of complex systems from genes to humans (language, differentiated culture, science, etc.) requires a sort of necessary feedback and control, that would limit opportunities of an individual in favour of the entire society, of course, to the extent that is not harmful to the individual or the entity. For millions of years, nature has been looking for such trade-offs — species, which did not cooperate became extinct and vice versa. (Koukolík, 1997) Not only cooperation and continual pursue for optimal compromise between opportunities (or freedom) of individual and good of all society are present in human society, but, as pointed out by many authors (whether in the field of social philosophy, psychology, anthropology, ethnology etc.), “fight for recognition” is present, as well.

3.4 Struggle for Recognition

American political scientist, sociologist and philosopher F. Fukuyama in his famous book *The End of History and the Last Man* argues that the historical process is driven by two forces:

Development of modern natural science (prerequisite for the industrialization process and overall dynamics of modern economy)

Struggle for recognition (results from a purely human desire for recognition) (Fukuyama, 2002)

Fukuyama has picked up on Hegel, who first described the man who desired to be recognized as a human being and to exist in the company of people. The self-esteem and identity of Hegel's first man is related to the value that is attributed to him by other

people. The initial clash among first people eventuated in violent conflicts for prestige. Hegel divided the society into masters, who were willing to risk life and slaves, who were lacking such commitment. Willingness to risk one's life proves that one can act against its animal element — self-preservation. Going back to Fukuyama, in his view, the main problem of human history and society is the question of how to satisfy the desire of masters and slaves for recognition. History, according to Fukuyama, will end with a victory of such society that would be able to achieve this. For description of Hegel's understanding of value, which the society attaches to an individual, Fukuyama used the Greek term "thumos". This term was originally used in the sense of soul, life force, wish, request; later (i.e.: in the New Testament) this word represents anger, passion, anger outburst.

Fukuyama's concept of the term "thumos" — irritability, thirst for glory, pride, conceit, self-love, ambition, and especially the desire for recognition

This element of personality is a source of personal pride, emotion, anger, shame (it cannot be reduced to sense or desire)

Sense of self-esteem and dignity of human individual results from thumos

Thumos can be a source of

— human wickedness

— human virtues

and leads to

Isothymia — desire to be recognized as equal

Megalothymia — desire to be recognized as superior

In the history, megalothymia, which is the greatest threat to liberal democracy, shall be applied first. Humanity has arrived at the so-called "end of history" by imposing liberal democracy. (Fukuyama, 2002)

Recommended Literature

DAMASIO, A.R.: *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*, Harcourt Brace, 1999.

HAMILTON, W.D.: *The genetical evolution of social behaviour I – II*. *Journal of Theoretical Biology*, 7, 1–52, 1964.

4. Socialization

keywords: *socialization, primary socialization, secondary socialization, theory of mind, intentionality, autism*

The topic of an individual in the society remains the topic of the following chapter, as well. The mechanisms of socialization, its development and anomalies shall be examined further.

4.1 Socialization

The process of integration of an individual into the society and vice versa, the impact of environment on the development of personality of the individual is called socialization. Two types of socialization can be distinguished: **primary socialization** — from the birth of a child as a part of education in a family that communicates the basic social standards and patterns of behaviour, and **secondary socialization**, which can be seen as a lifelong process following the primary socialization (school, work, etc.). (Nakonečný, 2009)

The most widely known and experimentally studied mechanism of social cognition is a phenomenon known as *theory of mind*. This phenomenon indicates that the individual has a presumption of the contents of mind of another person — understands that other people have mental states that govern their behaviour. (Dunbar, Barrett, Lycett, 2007) An individual may be aware that at any moment the content of these mental states may be different from his own and from objective reality. (For example, there is a following

trio of people — a woman, her husband and a stranger. The woman thinks that the stranger is boring; stranger believes that the woman consider him as extremely attractive; the husband suspects that the stranger believes that the husband's wife wants to run away with him. The stranger who does not know the relationship between the husband and the wife has the incorrect assumption as to the state of wife's mind; husband drew the correct conclusion on the contrary, because he understands signals of his wife and is able to interpret them correctly, and he has the so-called theory of mind.)

4.2 Intentionality

Theory of mind is usually referred to with the term *intentionality*, which represent states of mind associated with assumptions, desires, and beliefs, at the same time there is a hierarchy of intentionality — the first-level intentionality represents psychic processes related to personal assumptions and desires (I think that something is so and so). Theory of mind represents the second-level intentionality — “I think that you think that something is so and so”. The levels of intentionality can be expanded in any direction — for example, writing a novel about ménage trois requires the fifth-level intentionality — author's intention is to make the reader believe that character X thinks that character Y is confident that character Z wants something. The reader of the novel must have one more level of intentionality in order to understand and stay focused. (Dunbar, Lycett, Barrett, 2007) In the field of philosophy the concept of intentionality is handled by phenomenology. F. Brentano referred to this term as the connection between consciousness of the subject and object of the consciousness; psychic phenomena, according to him, are always aimed at something, in other words, they are always consciousness of something (Brentano, 1993) E. Husserl used the concept of intentionality in his phenomenology method as well, in meaning to relate of consciousness (e.g.: in

perception, reminiscence, etc.) (Husserl, 2004) When young children are able to share complaisance, they begin to use the “social reference” for the regulation of their conduct to serve as a means of verification of another person’s emotions (especially mother’s) to the objects around, by which they can make their own attitude to a given subject. If a child does not feel safe — for example, in presence of a stranger, the child shifts glances from suspicious object to the mother to find out her attitude and expression. A phenomenon called “visual gap” demonstrates this, for example. It utilizes the device, which captures the perception of depth in a child — a transparent glass cover that is placed on a patterned surface and is plummeted into the depth. The child is in no real danger of falling, because the glass cover is unbroken. The child is governed by the reaction of the mother, who is on the other side of the “gap”. If the mother’s face is calm, smiling and encouraging, the child continues; its behaviour is dependent on the attitude of the mother. (Dunbar, 1996) The ability to understand the emotions of others is an important springboard for further development of the child. At the age of about 18–24 months children begin to play at “something” and to play “supposedly” — they play with a banana, which is “supposedly” the phone, cook for a doll, etc. When a child recognizes that another child is playing something and is able to participate, then the child is able to understand to extent of the mental state of that other child. As mentioned by Dunbar, Barrett and Lycett (2007), the use of expressions that express desire is more or less constant for children of all ages, but the terms that reflect the assumptions are beginning to appear more frequently in the vocabulary of children who have reached the age of three. Around this time a child reaches the understanding of the state of assumptions (secondary representation or meta-representation — e.g.: X thinks that there is a newspaper on the table; see Dunbar, Barrett and Lycett, 2007, 390–399).

4.3 Incorrect Assumption Test

The child acquires understanding of the theory of mind at age of 4 or 5. In this age the child is able to handle the test of incorrect assumption — e.g.: the Smarties test, in which the child is asked a question: What is in a box of Smarties? The child assumes that Smarties. Then child is presented with the fact that the box actually contains crayons and the child is asked — what would be the answer of the child’s best friend, if he got the same question. Children, who do not have a theory of mind, would answer “crayons”; children, who understand that others may have a wrong assumption, answer “Smarties”. (Dunbar, Barrett, Lycett, 2007) There is an analogy to this test with Sally and Ann dolls. Sally puts a ball into the basket and leaves the room. Then comes Ann, takes out the ball and hides it in a box. The child is then asked where would Sally look for the ball when she returns? Children approximately up to the age of 4 will answer “in box” — they are unable to assume the perspective of Sally; children older than 4 years will usually provide a correct answer.

4.4 Theory of Mind Defects

Psychologists are still arguing whether the theory of mind appears suddenly at the age of about 4, or is present in a child as a kind of implicit fitness, but none of them has any doubt about the significance of the theory of mind for the healthy social development of the individual. The sad cases are the children who fail the test of incorrect assumptions and never achieve the theory of mind, though their IQ is not seriously damaged. These are the individuals who suffer from autism.

It is a syndrome that affects at least 4 to 5 out of 10 000 children. Children diagnosed with autism have severe deficiencies in social and communication skills (lack of eye contact, face recognition, do not understand metaphors, non-verbal aspects of

communication, they have little imagination — they miss the play at “something”), etc. (Cohen, Bolton, 1993) In addition to the absence of social skills, a number of antisocial symptoms is associated with autism — obsessions, concern about trivial details, stereotyped behaviour, hypersensitivity to sound, difficulties with adaptation to changes, etc. (Cohen, Bolton, 1993) Most children with autism are severely retarded; about 25% of them have an average IQ. Individuals with autism are unable to master the test of incorrect assumption or the test of correct assumption (the test of correct assumption is easier than the test of incorrect assumption — the character of our “story” understands that the situation is not the same as it was before — e.g.: Sally can see Ann how she moves the ball to different place). Perner (1989), Leslie (1991) and others believe that autistic children are unable to master the tests of correct and incorrect assumptions because they are constantly misled to the wrong way by unimportant characters and story details.

4.5 Williams Syndrome

Williams syndrome is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects 1 in 25,000 children. Diagnostically important features are characteristic facial features — “pixie face”: smaller head, narrow face, bulging forehead, raised eyebrows, closer eye slits, enlarged or reduced distance between canthuses, wide, flat nasal bridge, full cheeks, small teeth with wide spaces, low-lying ears and narrow temples. Other characteristic features of individuals affected by Williams syndrome include mild to moderate mental retardation. These individuals exhibit specificities in social behaviour. They are extremely sociable, friendly. They particularly excel in expressive speech skills, they are very polite, and they have no fear of strangers and show much more interest in contact with adults than with their peers. They have excellent verbal skills — their language is relatively smooth, with good articulation and rich vocabulary. Other mentioned features include stubbornness, excessive anxiety,

and distractibility, impulsivity, and mood fluctuations. Children with this syndrome exhibit hypersensitivity to sound, but at the same time musical sensibilities; they often even have perfect pitch and good auditory memory. In addition to these, they have a great ability to recognize faces. Some researchers (Tager-Flusberg, Sullivan, Stone) on the basis of data on subjects with Williams syndrome believe that theory of mind is composed of two separate components — the socio-cognitive, which is designed to represent mental states of others and social-perceptual, which is used to represent emotional states of other individuals.

Autistic children show defects in both aspects of the theory of mind, the social-perceptual portion of children with Williams syndrome is much less damaged, so they are able to respond emotionally to the environment, while autistic children are unable to do so. An interesting fact is that children with Williams syndrome, despite the fact that they are empathetic and friendly, have low social evaluation and difficulty to maintain friendships. This is probably due to the fact that complex social thinking is dependent on both components of the theory of mind, hence, socio-cognitive and socio-perceptive. (Dunbar, Barrett, Lycett, 2007)

Recommended Literature

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5. Social Perception. Perceptual Stereotypes. Prejudices

keywords: *social perception, prejudices, perception stereotypes*

5.1 Social Perception

The topic of the next chapter is the perception of others, social situations and interpretation of how people perceive each other, impressions they form of themselves (this actually starts the social interaction — what impression an individual form of others, that way he treats them). This formation of impression of others has been identified as “social perception”. Today, the term is usually replaced by the term “social cognition”, although several authors still use the accepted term *social perception*.

For example, S.T. Fiske and S.E. Taylor refer to the concept of social cognition as to how people form impression (make sense) of other people and themselves. (Nakonečný, 2009)

Social perception includes the ways of how people perceive themselves and other people in social situations; what judgments they create about themselves and the others.

It is not only the perception of social events, but also the interpretation of perceived reality.

Evidently, man perceives other people subjectively; his perception and assessment is influenced by social factors, expectations, experience and affectivity. Social perception is marked by errors, bias, facilitating, and so called “logical errors” that do not always give entirely reliable picture of the other person. (Tavel, 2012) As

P. Tavel (2012) states, social perception is a compromise between what a person expects based on their experience and what actually occurs in the outside world. The basic factors that influence social perception of persons are mentioned by P.F. Secord and C.W. Backman:

1. Information — physical appearance, expressive and other motoric symptoms, verbal behaviour
2. Variables — prior knowledge and feelings of perceived stimuli
3. Impression of stimulating person — attribution of personality traits, current feelings about the perceived person.

The aforementioned authors refer to three factors that shape our daily formation of impressions of other persons:

- amount of achievable information about the perceived person
- range of interactions between the sentient and the perceived
- level of well-established relationship between the sentient and the perceived

The first two factors are closely related — the more time people spend together, the better they get to know each other; the third factor often causes distortion of impressions — nice individuals are being overestimated and vice versa. (Nakonečný, 2009)

5.2 Perceptual Judgments Validity

It turns out that the accuracy of perceptual judgments is an extremely important element in our daily lives. An individual who is consistently unsuccessful in understanding others, has a difficult life (some authors see the inability as a cause of many mental illnesses). The psychologists include among the main characteristics of personality involved in interpersonal cognition

- social sensitivity
- social intelligence

Differences in the perception of others tend to be particularly influenced by:

- age (age significantly influences the selection of features that

- we notice about other people)
- intersexual differences (women formulate different types of judgments from men; women are more conscious of personal characteristics, men perceive the social role of assessed individuals more)
- personality traits (they play a special role in social perception); on the part of the assessor the most important include: empathy, authoritarianism, hostility or aggression, cognitive complexity, sociability
- intelligence (there is a link between intelligence and perceptual validity of judgments)
- the influence of professional orientation (e.g.: after long-term practice of certain profession we attain “professional bias”; especially interesting are the professions where the entity is specially trained in social perception)
- the amount of information that we have about the other person

5.3. The Mechanisms Leading to Distorted Perceptions and Assessment of Others

HALO-EFFECT — effect of the first impression; a systematic error in the evaluation of humans, in which a single personality trait is so prominent that the other traits are pushed into the background

PROJECTIONS — ascription of personal motives, strengths and patterns of behaviour to others

EFFECT OF NOVELTY — the latest information has more significant impact on the formation of impressions of others

PROMINENCE IN BEHAVIOUR — phenomenon of apparent correlation — inclination to ascribe a prominent behaviour to a person of physical prominence

POPULARITY OR UNPOPULARITY OF THE PERCEIVED (popularity evokes an inclination to a more positive perception, while the opposite trend raises unpopularity)

EFFECT OF LENIENCY — positive assessment of people to whom we have a positive attitude (especially parents)

ERROR OF CENTRAL TENDENCY — tendency to avoid extreme evaluation; qualities of others are perceived in central neutral zone, fear of extreme evaluation

ERROR OF CONTRAST — alien qualities are perceived preferentially

PREJUDICES — qualities are ascribed to a person based on his/her affiliation to specific social group

The term halo effect was used for the first time by E. L. Thorndike. The term is derived from the word “halo”, which means nimbus, glory, aureole, therefore sometimes so-called “halo effect” is being used as a term. G. Nawratil and B. Rabaioli-Fischer describe the following example: imagine that you would see a person coming with a halo on the street, and only on this basis, you should compile a list of his qualities. The list probably would not contain that a person is drunk, or a thief, or that he is a womanizer, or that he is cheating financial authorities. How is it that we have concluded all of this about him? After all, there is only single information regarding this person — a halo, which is the determining cognitive attribute, based on which the whole personality was described. (Tavel, 2012; Démuthová, 2005)

5.4 Prejudice

Prejudice could be simply characterized as previously formed attitude towards an object, which is manifested regardless of the individuality of the object. An individual does not consider the bias in the assessment of other persons any alternative explanation; the results of his interpersonal evaluations are predetermined. (Hayes, 1998)

Prejudice does not have to be only negative. For example, philosopher H.G. Gadamer spoke of so-called positive prejudice — tradition, into which all people are born. Prejudice, pre-understanding

is a precondition for the possibility of any understanding — understanding cannot be exempted from assumptions. A crucial part of understanding is the tradition — a person who seeks to understand the subject is linked to the object of understanding by language, which in turn is linked with tradition. (Gadamer, 2010)

Negative prejudice, which is often present in the society and has very negative consequences, is ethnic prejudice. Psychologist Allport described five development stages of ethnic prejudice that exist in a society that is inclined toward racism:

- slander (hostile speech, racist propaganda, etc.)
- isolation (separation of the ethnic group from the majority in society)
- discrimination (denial of civil rights)
- physical assault (violence against persons or property)
- eradication (violence against a whole group)

K. Lorenz saw the aggression associated with prejudice as a basic and necessary instinct related to the protection of the territory. (Lorenz, 2003). Likewise, prejudice against outside groups was interpreted by Dawkins (1989), who argued that prejudice is a kind of biological instinct that compels individuals to protect fellows that share their genes. This theory also corresponds with the concept of prejudice in socio-biology by E.O. Wilson, which he based on the observation of ant communities. Wilson emphasized the importance of kin selection over other factors. (Hayes, 1998)

Philosopher and sociologist T.W. Adorno argued that the basis of prejudice is a certain type of personality and upbringing that makes certain types of people to incline towards prejudice against outside groups. These are primarily people whose parents enforce harsh discipline that caused the child's aggressive feelings, but it also did not allow the child to express these feelings so they internalized and were expressed towards other objects. Particularly against minority groups and all people who are socially different.

In addition to ethnic prejudice, psychologists, anthropologists, aesthetes and other scholars are interested in prejudice related to

the perception of attractive and unattractive people. With the ancient platonic identification of beauty and goodness the positive qualities are generally ascribed to more attractive people. So, attractive people are, in a sense, born under a lucky star. They suffer less from loneliness, social anxiety and embarrassment in the public. We like to help them; we like to relate to them; it even turned out that it is more difficult to lie to an attractive person than to a less attractive one. Attractive individuals are preferred as sexual partners; they have a more positive opinion about themselves in terms of skills and mental health. Attractiveness is often connected with intelligence — attractive individuals are perceived to be more intelligent, etc. (Blažek, Trnka, 2009). To conclude this chapter, there is a list of stereotypes that are associated with the perception and assessment of physical appearance, as stated by G.W. Allport:

- Hostility and lack of sense of humour are attributed to people with darker complexions.
- Various favourable qualities are attributed to blonde women.
- Facial wrinkles around eyes are considered as friendly and reckless.
- Older women are considered to be mothers.
- People who wear glasses or have a high forehead are perceived as more intelligent.
- Women with full lips are perceived as sexual and women with narrow lips are perceived as asexual.
- Older men are seen as more refined, more responsible and more educated than younger men.
- Laughing faces are considered more intelligent.
- Protruding lips are perceived as a sign of vanity, greed and immorality.
- Superstition, religiousness and frivolity are attributed to every black face.
- Faces, that are average in terms of nose shape, chin shape, etc., are associated with more favourable characteristics than faces of the aberrant form. (Nakonečný, 2009).

Basically, these are all halo-effect prejudices. Many people probably have not realized it yet, but bearers of an academic degree (associate professors, professors) tend to be evaluated more positively than others, regardless of their performance. Energetic performance of a speaker creates an image of a hard and strong man (Tavel, 2012). With an intelligent man, it is more probable that his unreliability and dishonesty are overlooked. There is a tendency to consider someone who agrees with us to be intelligent. A person, who complains or is in opposition, is inclined to get negative evaluation. (Tavel, 2012) For further study of the issue of cognitive illusions and prejudices please study the book by S. Gálíková: *Úvod do filozofie mysle* (Gálíková, 2013).

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6. Social Brain

keywords: *neocortex, amygdale, social maturity*

The next chapter continues in the previous theme of social perception (cognition), and neurobiological mechanism of perception, that is the brain and its individual components, which are related to social cognition, shall be discussed in more details.

6.1 Social Cognition and Brain

As mentioned by Koukolík (2006), primate social behaviour is in the contrast with rigid behaviour of, for example, bees, as well as many mammals, very complex. It requires social cognition, which was described in the previous chapter as the ability to create representations of the relations between them and the surroundings and use them to manage social behaviour. Social environment is, in comparison to physical environment, much more complex and unpredictable. Social cognition is influenced by genes and environment (beginning with intrauterine development). It relies on the mechanisms of perception and interpreting of stimuli, which together form the necessary information for the constitution of central representation of social stimuli. This includes the case of visual social cognition of the fusiform gyrus area and cortical area of superior temporal sulcus, speech cortex, amygdale, orbit frontal cortex, front and rear cortical areas of gyrus cinguli and somatosensory areas of right hemisphere. (Koukolík, 2006)

Capacity of neocortex is a determinant factor for social cognition. The following five necessary social skills are related to this factor:

- size of the social group
- size of the social group, that provides mutual grooming
- extent, to which polygamous male primates are using social skills for mating
- frequency of tactical swindles
- frequency of social play (Dunbar, Barrett, Lycett, 2007)

The correlation with the neocortex capacity is confirmed by all aforementioned factors. From the relationship between the neocortex capacity and group size comes the number of members in the groups that care about one another's coat (so-called grooming — it shall be discussed later). Crows can be listed as an example of interesting social animals. Crows have telencephalon (especially nidopallium and mesopallium, that is the areas of brain, which are considered an analogy of prefrontal cortex of mammals) significantly larger than other birds. Ravens are capable of producing tools, causal and flexible thinking; they are able to envision future; their social cognition is manifested in the protection and stealing of supplies. Some species of ravens are capable of using two types of instruments to catch the hardly accessible insects — a hook made of twigs and a harpoon made of Pandanus leaves. (Koukolík, 2006) In laboratory conditions the New Caledonian Crow was capable of producing a hook from a wire, which it saw for the first time in life. It appears that crows, non-human primates and man have a common denominator — a network of social behaviour has been discovered in the brain of vertebrate, which consists of, as stated by Koukolík, six nodes:

- Medial amygdala
- Lateral septum
- Preoptic area
- Frontal hypothalamus

- Ventromedial hypothalamus
- Areas around mesencephalon (Koukolík, 2006)

6.2 Areas Responsible for Selected Social Functions

- Amygdala — recognition of emotional expressions; response to facial expressions (especially fear and threat)
- Temporal ridge — evaluation of direct eye contact
- Areas of frontal lobes — evaluation of mental states (neocortex)
- Damage of left medial frontal cortex — problems with adequate behaviour in social situations, but also, for example, in understanding of metaphors

Frontal lobes were declared as a sort of “highest office” of morality, and although the fact that they are damaged or underdeveloped does not necessarily mean that it leads to immorality, there is a close relationship between them and social behaviour. Goldberg (2004), for example, analyzed the so-called orbit frontal lobe syndrome, which is more or less the opposite of the dorsolateral syndrome (the individual appears as if without personality or emotions). Individuals, who suffer from orbit frontal syndrome, appear to be emotionally uninhibited; their neutral emotions are very rare and they constantly oscillate between euphoria and rage; they lack control of their own impulses regardless of social taboos, or the law; they do not foresee consequences of their actions. (Goldberg, 2004)

6.3 Consequences of Frontal Lobes Damage

Goldberg describes a patient, who suffers from orbit frontal syndrome (due to head injury, or dementia, or cerebral artery disease), as an individual who steals; is sexually aggressive; his actions are selfish, pubescent, provocative, and ostentatious; has tasteless humour, etc. He also refers to the case of an elderly patient with

a broad smile who entered his office with words — *doctor, you are very hairy*, which of course are not the best words for greeting someone. The man suffered from, according to Goldberg's diagnosis, early stage of dementia affecting mainly the frontal lobes. (Goldberg, 2004) This relationship is not only evident through the cases of brain damage; it was proved also that, for example, a number of people committing crimes showed abnormal (mostly under-sized) activity in the area of right frontal lobes. (Démuthová, 2012)

6.4 Social Maturity

Studies confirm that control over own actions is not inherited, but occurs during individual development. Hysterical behaviour of an adult is judged quite differently compared to the same behaviour in case of a child. Goldberg argues that the ability of volatile control of own actions is one of the most important components of social maturity. (Goldberg, 2004) American psychiatrist A. Schore, on the basis of his research claims that for the healthy development of the orbit frontal cortex an early mother–child interaction in the first months of life is necessary. Stressful experiences in child's life during this period can permanently damage orbit frontal cortex and the affected person is subsequently more predisposed to mental illness. (Schore, 1998)

According Koukolík and Drtilová (2008), brain development is most turbulent during the period of intrauterine growth. It can be endangered by fluctuations of maternal temperature, hormone levels, viruses, excess or deficiency of vitamins, smoking during pregnancy; alcohol and drugs that mother abuses, and other toxic substances from the environment. The authors argue that the mother, who is expecting a child (a boy) and smokes 10 or more cigarettes per day, increases the risk that it will suffer from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. (Koukolík, Drtilová, 2008) Even a subtle disruption of intrauterine brain development, during birth or soon after, can cause neurodevelopmental disorders.

These generally do not appear until adolescence or during young adulthood, when a person is exposed to full social stress. Damage or disease of the front parts of the brain in early development has significant, although delayed effects — usually many years pass between the damage and antisocial manifestations. Koukolík and Drtilová (2008) give an example about two women and a man, who were 28, 33 and 24 years old at the time of diagnosis. The 28-year-old woman developed normally until the age of 4, when she was hit by a car, suffered a fractured skull and was unconscious for 48 hours. The second woman suffered from bleeding in the frontal parts of the cortex and white matter when she was 7, after a surgery she remained in coma for 7 days. The man was only 7 days old when he suffered from blood outburst from pachymeninx, which required drainage. Behavioural disturbances in emotional and social areas in all three cases became evident at a later date. The man and the first woman had no problems with language, memory or eyesight, but they were acting very impulsively, their logical abilities were damaged, they were unable to foresee consequences of their behaviour, they did not know remorse or empathy, and they behaved recklessly towards their immediate surroundings. The second woman had the most apparent problems in adolescence, as if the development of social values, morality, sexual attitudes, etc. suddenly stopped. She suffered from moodiness and impulsivity; she was unable to make decisions. All three patients had some parts of the frontal lobes of the brain, especially prefrontal, affected. (Koukolík, Drtilová, 2008)

Studies by American neurologist Damasio are also very interesting. He examined a young woman and a man who had suffered damage to their frontal lobe at an early age, and later they both started to show signs of antisocial behaviour — lying, stealing, neglecting school attendance, etc. Damasio believes that this type of a patient is not only behaving antisocially, but also they are not able to assess their own actions as moral or immoral. (Damasio, 1999)

6.5 Biological Adolescence and Social Maturity

Throughout the history of human society, the time of achieving maturity is changing, depending on cultural, religious, or political and other contexts. Jews reach adulthood when they are 13 years old and celebrate bar mitzvah, which is full of joy, symbolism, although even after the celebration the boy still remains a boy. Probably about 3000 years ago a 13 year old boy was really considered an adult. On the island of Bali there are festivities related to adulthood ceremony called mepanes, in which 16-year-old young men and women have their teeth grinded — by this ritual, young people differ from the animal world and are associated with the world of civilization. Six upper teeth are grinded during the ceremony, which represent six vices — sexual desire, anger, greed, drunkenness, pride and jealousy.

In the modern society, individuals are usually considered as adults when they attained the age of 18, when they become voters and citizens responsible for their actions. The age of about 18 is also the age at which the development of frontal lobes is finalized. (Goldberg, 2004)

Naturally, the society, even without results from neurosciences, has discovered that only at certain age an individual develops a reasonable control of their own impulses. Until as mature by law, he cannot be held responsible for own actions, either legal or moral. Social maturity depends on the maturity of frontal lobes. (Goldberg, 2004)

An interesting fact is that in ancient and medieval societies, social maturity was reached much earlier than today. From history we know that teenage youngsters often ruled vast territories, led armies and major wars (Pharaoh Ramses the Great, Alexander of Macedon, Peter the Great, and others). In the contemporary society it is different — high positions of power are not very accessible to young individuals, for example, by law the U.S. President must be at least 35 years old, which would completely disqualify,

for example, Alexander of Macedon, who lived up to the age of 32. (Goldberg, 2004)

In everyday life, it appears that society is able to understand and accept the neurological disorders of language, perception, and memory, but disorders of frontal lobes are almost never understood. Goldberg (2004) points out that people perceive such individuals as impulsive, uncooperative, without initiative and they ascribe to them the formula: *it is not brain; it is personality*; while they are convinced that personality is born in the brain.

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7. Social Function of Language

keywords: *language, communication, verbal communication, non-verbal communication*

This chapter deals with the relationship of language and society. Language tends to be considered the only ability that distinguishes humans from other living organisms. This is mainly due to the fact that language allows us to exchange information and thus influence the mindset of our surroundings. Language has played an essential role in shaping the culture.

7.1 Origins of Language

Tracing the origins of human language is an important key to understanding how we have become so unique. Indeed, because of the language we are able to communicate together more effectively than animals. (Diamond, 2004) Positive progress, formation of culture, art, technology etc. was made possible due to speech which developed differently than animal speech. The origins of human language since Darwin's times remained an interesting, but probably insoluble evolutionary problem. How did the man overcome the gap between himself and the animal? If we accept the widespread assumption that a man evolved from animals, which lack the ability of human language, then human language had developed together with human skull, pelvis, tools, etc. First, there had to be some sort of transitional stage of speech, which linked

monkey noises and Shakespearean sonnets. (Diamond, 2004) Explaining the origins of human language by scientists proved to be much more difficult than to trace the origins of the skull, pelvis, or the first instruments (all of this could be preserved, discovered, dated, but the spoken word disappears immediately). African monkey — macaque can boast with the most sophisticated animal language. For obvious reasons, the wild macaques, similar to other animals, are constantly forced to deal with situations where communication is essential. Macaque must recognize martial eagle (the biggest predator of macaques) from African vulture that feeds on dead animals and poses no threat to living macaques. In case the martial eagle appears, it is necessary to respond properly and warn others. If the eagle is not recognized in time, the macaque dies; if macaque fails to communicate the threat to its relatives, it is their end along with a part of your genes becoming lost, as well. In case that macaque thinks that it saw an eagle, while a vulture flew over its head, macaque would be wasting its time by redundant protection, while other members of the group continue to collect food without being disturbed. (Diamond, 2004)

7.2 Relationship of Language and Social Group Size

Communication and language are related to the size of the social group of primates. As reported by Dunbar (1996), the number of members in social groups of primates is determined by different ecological, demographic and cognitive variables — Dunbar and Hill (2003) came to the probable number of 60 members of australopithecines, 80 members of *Homo habilis*, 100 members of *Homo erectus* and 150 members of modern humans. This figure (100 — 150) in contemporary society of developed countries corresponds approximately to the number of people that an individual can ask for a service and expect a positive response.

The observations of evolutionary psychologists suggest that wild primates devote approximately 20% of their free time to

mutual care for their fur — so-called grooming. If a group of 150 modern humans performed such grooming, they would spend 43% of the daily schedule. On the other hand, humans spend time with conversation, which makes for 20% of daily time, i.e. equal share that nonhuman primates spend with grooming. (Dunbar, Barrett, Lycett, 2007)

For many evolutionary psychologists it represents the explanation of the fact that language developed as a facility of further advancement of social grooming. Human language allows the grooming of more than one member of the group at once; other activities can be performed besides grooming, as well, and allows the exchange of social information about events in human social network that occurred in our absence. (Koukolík, 2006). One of the most interesting problems related to the origins of language is examining the question of the extent to which language is innate, i.e. phenomenon caused by evolution. Several scientific theories offer replies to this problem. The authors, who are convinced that language evolved gradually, believe that this development continued for several thousands of years. Fully developed language, as estimated by many scientists, appeared approximately 50,000 years ago, at similar time as symbolic art.

Theory of innate language base is confirmed by the research of deaf Nicaraguan children who were home educated before 1970; many of them formed their own family sign language, a system of gestures through which children communicated. Older children taught younger ones and nowadays this language (NSL — Nicaraguan Sign Language) is used by approximately 800 people aged 4 to 45 years. The development of NSL has commenced with children initially categorizing complex events into essential elements, then from these they shaped complicated expressions. Younger children enriched this process and transformed the sign language into language system. (Koukolík, 2007)

If one thinks about innateness of language, one has to have in mind mainly the congenital basics — predispositions of language.

These predispositions are developed relatively quickly by environmental influences — communication, and vice versa — if children aged around 2–5 do not speak at all, they will never learn to speak. This is confirmed by Indian girls Kamala and Amala, who were found in a wolf den, or Laotian girl Mai case who was closed and isolated in a cage for several years by her superstitious family because they feared she was being infected with rabies. (Douglas, 1995)

7.3 Language and Group Cohesion

The above examples show the dual conditionality of linguistic competence acquisition — language is, on one hand, the result of neurobiological susceptibility of specific brain centres of a man and, on the other hand, it is the result of cultural influence of human communicating community. Both conditions — specific neural apparatus and early experience with language practise are prerequisites for language competence.

If language is a form of long-distance care maintaining consistency of large groups, one unanswered question remains — what is the importance of syntax, because if it was just to keep the community united, the nonverbal communication would be sufficient as pointed by Barrett, Lycett, Dunbar (2007). There are three different hypotheses regarding the fact that the content of conversations can effectively influence the consistency of large social groups.

Hypothesis of gossips — a key factor for the cohesion of major groups, according to Dunbar, is the exchange of information on current and future states of social networks — gossips in the broadest sense (Dunbar, 1996)

Hypothesis of social contract — according to Deacon, language developed to facilitate the coordination of social contracts (such as marriage); (Deacon, 1997)

Scheherazade effect — according to Miller, language evolved by sexual selection in the context of finding a partner. (Miller, 2001).

7.4 Communication

We have mentioned that all socially living animals communicate with each other. They communicate, for example, to signalize a found pasture, or an approaching predator, distancing from the herd, etc. Communication can be defined as a kind of social interaction, either as a unilateral transmission of information or an exchange of information. The means of communication are not just words and gestures, but behaviour as such; it is a process of transmission of information, ideas, attitudes and emotions of others. This process implies a kind of common sharing of meaning of signs as a means of communication so that each culture has its own communication system, which includes not only the language, but also the specific gestures and behaviours that is missed by members of other cultures. (Nakonečný, 2009)

The communication is understood as:

Verbal communication — spoken and written language

Meta (paralinguistic) characteristics — tone of voice, ironic colour of voice, accent, etc.

Nonverbal communication — facial expressions (emotions can be easily recognized from some facial expressions (happy / sad, calm / excitement, anxiety / reassurance, etc.); sight (eye contact plays a vital role in communication — eyes convey information and receive it, as well. The optimal length of eye contacts constitutes about 50% of the communication time; if this time is longer, it signifies excessive dominance, authority, influencing each other, or intimate contact. Shorter eye contact, on the other hand, signifies uncertainty, avoiding the contact, closeness), gestures (movements of the hands, head, legs), haptics (touch), body language (posture — includes tension, release. Identical posture represents cohesion, understanding; different posture means misunderstanding, different opinions), proxemics (distance between people that is distinguished as horizontal — less than 0.5 meter = intimate distance, 0.5 — 2 meters = personal distance, 1 — 10 meters = group distance, 2

— 100 meters = public distance. Vertical distance — if an individual stands over a seated partner, he/she acquires psychological superiority.); territory — (personal space); neurovegetative reactions — (physiologic body response may be manifested by palpitations, fading or blushing, trembling hands, sweating, changes in breathing, etc.); image (style of dressing, make-up, choosing a car, overall lifestyle — practical, luxurious, neglected, etc.); environment (physical space where a man is present may indicate many of his features — self-neglect / pedantry, sense of aesthetics, practicality, etc.); chronemics (structuring communication time).

A man has his nonverbal expressions less under control than the verbal ones; the listener also attributes more importance to nonverbal mediation of information than to the verbal one, whereby the most important are facial expressions (eye contact, face-play), movements of hands and feet, movements and postures of the whole body. (Mikuláščík, 2003)

Recommended Literature

DOUGLAS, K.C.: *Feral Children and Clever Animals: Reflections on Human Nature*. Oxford University Press, 1995.

DUNBAR, R.: *Grooming, Gossip and the Evolution of Language*. Harvard University Press, 1996.

8. Emotions

keywords: *emotions, primary emotions, secondary emotions*

In the following chapter we shall discuss the skill which the functioning of society cannot do without. We shall deal with emotions.

8.1 Emotions and Their Importance

The ability to imagine emotions of other people turns out to be as important as the ability to imagine the state of mind. Inadequacy of this skill results in social disorder (autism). For a long time there has been the belief that emotions could not be compared to fuel to drive the development of cognitive functions, but it is already a refuted opinion — although emotions are not usually considered the domain of rational decision-making processes, in fact, they serve to strengthen our ability to think effectively. Emotional life develops hand in hand with the development of cognitive functions. (Drtilová, Koukolík, 1994).

Scientists attribute the following three elements to emotions:

- biological (brain systems that are responsible for their creation, running and storing in memory)
- psychological (ways in which we experience feelings)
- social (ways in which we express feelings, including the impact on our environment) (Drtilová, Koukolík, 1994)

The significance of “healthy” emotions does not have to be emphasized. Having no or ill emotions, we are only brutes incapable of

social living. According to Damasio, emotions are changes in body condition associated with the stimulus (rapid heartbeat as a result of a loud blow) and *feelings* of emotions are experiences of this change. (Damasio, 1995) After the birth, we have the so-called **primary emotions** at our disposal (e.g.: fear) that are inherited. By gradual development, we use the so-called **secondary emotions** more and more, which can be characterized as primary emotions refined by skills. LeDoux (1998) assumes that information of certain powerful emotion, e.g.: fear, is passing through the brain in two ways — the first is short and fast, through the amygdala. This path allows an immediate instinctive reaction to danger. The second path leads through the cortex and creates a sense of fear. Amygdala can produce stronger influence on the cortex than the cortex can produce on amygdala, for this reason LeDoux assumes, that on many occasions we get carried away by our motions, although the rational reaction would result in more suitable solution (Barrett, Dunbar, Lycett, 2007). Similarly, according to Damasio (1995), some somatic indicators accelerate the decision-making process; this ability, according to him, belongs to the most important ones in the social sphere, as it is necessary to decide quickly due to unexpected stimuli — other people.

The issue of the role of emotions in society belongs to the continuous exploration in the field of evolutionary thinkers, psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers, etc. For example, Saarni, Campos and Mummy (1998) attribute regulatory function to emotion. Emotions, according to them, assist us in establishing, maintaining or altering the relationship between the individual and the environment. They regulate its goals, values, ideals, impulses from the environment, etc.

8.2 Classification of Emotions

Traditional division of emotions:

Lower emotions — simple emotions, affect and mood (present both in humans and animals)

Higher emotions (present only in human)

Most authors believe that simple emotions are innate, intercultural and universal. Their arguments are based on the examination and identification of the brain structures, facial expressions, patterns of physiological activity and readiness to act. (Slaměnik, 2011). However, there are still opposing opinions against these theories convinced that even the most basic emotions are culturally conditioned.

Affects — they can be characterized as strong, turbulent emotional reactions; they are accompanied by physiological changes; they have mostly negative impact on social surroundings.

Moods — are emotional conditions that last for a longer period of time; they usually control the behaviour of an individual who does not have to realize their causes in full extent. Emotions and moods may affect each other and shift from one to another.

Higher emotions — linked to social needs, values and human standards.

The analysis of emotions is present in the history of philosophy; major contributions to this phenomenon can be found in works by Descartes and Spinoza. R. Descartes in his work *Pasions of the Soul* described six kinds of affects: wonder, love, hatred, desire, joy and sadness. Astonishment is an emotional state in which we are confronted with an object yet unknown, which we do not know whether it is beneficial or harmful. If it is useful for us, we respond with love, if malicious, with hate. If something is the subject of desire, we are happy if we can take possession of it, if we fail, sadness follows. (Röd, 2001) Descartes defined the affects as “perceptions” or emotional acts of soul. He explained the emergence of affects by assuming that there are different types of movements — *spiritus animales* which various types of affect depend on. For example, in case of surprise affect — this emotion emerges when ideas that are based on the object encounter those parts of the brain that are not normally exposed to such a stimulus, so they are particularly vulnerable — they are not blunted by

frequent impressions. Nowadays Descartes' mechanistic concept sounds a bit playful, but it can still be regarded as one of the first impulses for the modern psychology of emotions. (Röd, 2001) Perhaps the most important concept of affects was outlined in the history of philosophy by B. B. Spinoza. By affects he understood consciousness-accompanied changes (*affectio*) of a body, which either increase or decrease its ability to act. (Spinoza, 2007) Affect represents the relation between affection and a man, which is characterized by its tendency to self-preservation and self-realization. Spinoza termed the struggle for self-preservation related to the body and spirit as *instinct* (*appetitus*); if it was related to the spirit only, he used the term *will* (*voluntas*); he labelled the instinct that accompanies consciousness as *lust* (*cupiditas*). (Spinoza, 2007) Each affect can be described as positive or negative, considering whether it enhances or limits a specific activity. The definitions of simple emotions are known due to Ch. Darwin, who found the biological base of facial expression in them. Darwin was one of the first scientists to draw attention to the importance of mediation of emotional states of socially living animals (including humans). The distinction of internal state of another member of socially living animals, such as fear, pain, satisfaction, etc. depends on whether and to what extent the person observing another person has own experience with these feelings. If the animal does not have experience with its own fear, it is hardly able to distinguish what behaviour accompanies fear in another group member. However, if he has this experience, he is able to empathize with the emotional state of another. (Drtilová, Koukolík, 1994) Empathizing with other members of their own group is extremely important — it enhances the possibilities of the group to survive, it can be inherited and it is possible to develop it as other skills. Perhaps the situation of human groups would improve, if their members, including the youngest children, developed empathy.

In the second half of the 20th century Tomkinson's theory of emotion had strong influence — he set six basic emotions that

have their clearly distinguishable facial expressions: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise. These emotions can be understood as the primary emotions associated with basic needs. (Slaměník, 2011)

8.3 Development of Emotions

The first language of communication for newborns is emotions; they convey their physical needs, conditions, and at the age of approximately three months the need for interaction. Simply speaking, during the whole first year of life a child expresses his/her satisfaction or dissatisfaction, need for food, changing, snuggling, etc. through emotions. In the first weeks after birth, we observe a smile in a newborn during the REM phase of sleeping; during the first month child reacts to caress with a smile; in 8–10 weeks we observe the so-called social smile addressed to a nearby person and is characterized by an eye contact. (Slaměník, 2011)

Later, the smile becomes an expression of interest for an interaction, Oatley and Jenkins (1998) believe that even before the child purposefully directs his/her expression to another person, the function of the smile is to attract the surrounding to affective interaction. During toddler years, the child's emotions are gradually more and more readable for his/her surroundings; approximately at the age of two, all simple emotions are fully developed and a child learns to understand them, to describe them verbally and is able to distinguish emotions in his/her surroundings. They start to develop the so-called self-perception emotions, as well (Denham, 1998) — shame, guilt, jealousy, envy, embarrassment, etc., which later play an important role in the regulation of social behaviour. A preschool child spends more time talking about his/her emotions with his/her parents and close surroundings; he/she develops further understanding of emotions and gains the ability to be able to attribute emotions to others. The younger school-age child is able to repress emotions, or vice versa to express them

clearly. At puberty, there are turbulent changes in emotional life; the changes are related to the intensity of experiencing new quality of emotions. It is a period of emotional instability. During the adolescence a mollification of emotional life and a gradual return to the control of the emotions occurs, which was absent in puberty. This creates deep feelings as, for example, love or disappointment. (Slaměník, 2011)

8.4 Cultural Conditionality of Emotions

The most discussed and most researched area of emotions includes the problem of cultural conditionality. For example, as mentioned by Parkinson, Fischer, Manstead (2005) — English language contains approximately 2000 words that express emotions, Dutch around 1500, Taiwanese Chinese about 750 and Malay 230. Diverse cultures understand and express emotions differently; they are related to different situations. These differences are given by cultural traditions, rituals, values, expectations, etc. Examination of cultural conditionality of emotions does not mean only search for emotions that are culturally specific, but also those that occur universally across all cultures. (Slaměník, 2011) In the 1970s, the research of cultural conditionality of emotions relied mainly on allegations by Ekman and Izard, who derived the universality of emotion from facial expressions. These were followed by the dictionary-based studies — as most linguistic analyses confirm that in all languages there are simple words expressing emotions — fear, anger, sadness, joy, etc., although they may have shifted meanings. Ethnographer C. Lutz argues that most languages contain words for love, joy, fear, anger and sadness in their lexicology. Lutz also looked at social and cultural conditionality of emotions that are unknown to Western culture. She conducted a research on a small atoll in the Pacific Ocean, where the Ifaluk tribe lives (about 430 people). The tribe uses the word *fago*, which may be translated, according to the ethnographer, as compassion–love–anger. The word *fago* actually

represents a kind of concern for others. Parents consistently lead descendants to perceive and to experience situations that in adults evoke the fago emotion. (Slaměník, 2011)

8.5 Smile

A social function may be attributed to all emotions and this argument is even stronger in case of a smile. It is not only an expression of positive mood, but it helps us to strengthen relationships, build new ones, to reconcile, etc. Several studies confirm the nature of social smile — for example, A. Fridlund found that people are smiling especially in situations where someone can observe them to do so. (Lindová, 2009) Fridlund allowed his students to watch humorous videos with friends or alone, but knowing that a friend is nearby, or completely alone. He captured most of smiles when friends were watching a video together, somewhat less in the case of a friend being nearby, and the lowest number of smiles occurred if they watched a video alone. Mimic expression — a smile is extremely important to our everyday social functioning — more on this topic can be found in recommended study by Jitka Lindová (2009, In: *Lidský obličej: Úsměv a smích*).

Recommended Literature

SLUDDS, K.: *Emotions: Their Cognitive Base and Ontological Importance*. Peter Lang, 2009.

9. Laughter

keywords: *laughter, tragedy, comedy, humorousness, Bergson, Scruton*

From the smile, which we discussed at the end of the previous chapter, there is only a small step to *laughter*.

Human laughter is a unique phenomenon in the animal kingdom, although some parallels can be found in apes. (Barrett, Dunbar, Lycett, 2007). In addition to its social function, laughter has some prominent features — it promotes the release of endogenous opioids. After a fit of laughter, one can clearly feel relaxed and comfortable. Research (Berk, 1989; Zillman, 1993, Weisenberg, 1995) confirmed that both levels of opiates and the pain threshold are higher after a fit of laughter. According to Dunbar's hypothesis, laughter evolved to take over as the main means of sociality stimulation. (Dunbar, 1996)

Dunbar notes that there are two important facts in the development of laughter: 1. it is difficult to maintain a conversation with someone who does not laugh at all — one needs a response that assures him whether the listener is interested or not. In particular, women use laughter when meeting with a man as a means of expression of interest to continue the interaction with him. (Barrett, Dunbar, Lycett, 2007). A poor response from the listener indicates that he is losing time with us. 2. Let us attempt a self-reflection — how much of one's time and energy is required to make others laugh? It is a considerable amount of time and energy — listeners, who laugh a lot (and this does not apply just for conversations,

but also to lecturing, public appearances, etc.) pay attention to the speaker. (Barrett, Dunbar, Lycett, 2007)

9.1 Bergson

In the history of philosophy Bergson's concept of laughter has dominant position, as it is a topic that philosophers rather avoid (exceptions can be found, for example, in works of Schopenhauer or Scruton). In his essay *Le Rire*, Bergson does not try to form a definition of laughter and the humorousness; he rather examined what is considered humorous and when one laughs. He does not discuss laughter as a physiological reaction, but he attempts to analyze situations that produce physiological response. Humorousness, in his opinion, is induced only by humans. A country may be beautiful, graceful, unique, immaterial, or ugly, but never humorous. One laughs at an animal, because he is surprised by its human behaviour or expression. (Bergson, 1993)

Another moment, which Bergson points out, is the numbness that usually accompanies laughter. Once we feel empathy with the man who tripped on a banana peel, we are unable to laugh. The amount of serious and tragic events, according to Bergson, would turn into a tragedy if one did not put any distance from an emotion. An important condition for the development of the humorous is therefore a necessary distance, emotion blackout. The third fact to which Bergson draws attention is that laughter needs an echo. Humorousness cannot be enjoyed, if one feels lonely "... how many times has it been said that laughter of the audience in the theatre is the more powerful, the more the room is filled?" (Bergson, 1993, 18)

Bergson saw the mechanism of laughter in stiffness, rigidity, inertia. He mentioned an example of a man who performed all its activities with mathematical precision. Some mischief-maker, however, moved the objects around. Now, this man wanted to sit in a chair and fell to the ground, he wanted to soak the squid pen and pulled out some mud. The victim is humorous — he should stop or

alter his movement, but he continues in a learnt manner. Humans laugh at the mechanical stiffness, stupor. Laughter comes when a man is reduced to a mechanical body, to a machine. An example for Bergson were the people who stumbled and fell, then those who were victims of practical jokes, in which their usual habits and distractibility were being used. At this point, Bergson postulated the difference between comedy and tragedy.

Tragedies are individualistic and unique. Tragic hero is a character unique in its own way. He can be imitated, but by this — whether one wants it or not — one moves from the tragic to the humorous. (Bergson, 1993) The authors named their tragedy plays after the main character (Hamlet, Othello, and Oedipus) and had them fight with destiny. On the other hand, comedies are more universal. Their heroes act as if they were not aware that they are puppets and that they are manipulated. Comedy, according to Bergson, also captures the characters with whom we have met before and those, which we have not yet met. It captures similarities. Comedy sets types in front of people. If necessary, comedy creates new types. This makes the comedy different from other forms of art. (Bergson, 1993) The names of famous comedies provide an evidence for this — Misanthrope, The Miser, The Player, etc. In addition to a central character, authors of comedies often create one or more other characters with similar, or more precisely, the same personality traits. Many comedies contain a collective name in their titles — The Learned Ladies, World Governed by Boredom, etc. Since a man has the ability to identify with the comic character, comedy, according to Bergson, functions as a social corrective — people do not want to act like a comic character and they change for better. Bergson believes that this is how the humorous oscillates between life and art.

9.2 Humour of Forms and Movements

Bergson opens the debate on humour of forms and movements with a question, what actually creates humorous physiognomy. In his

opinion, it is the difference or distortion that can be imitated, which is considered humorous — e.g.: hunchback or facial expressions such as tics. Cartoons function in a similar way — they reveal hidden truth. What is revealed by them is actually rigidity, routine, linkage. The more the body resembles the machine, the more humorous it is in Bergson's opinion (e.g.: expressively gesticulating speakers).

9.3 Situational and Verbal Humour

Bergson considers humorous every collocation of acts and events that fit into one another, giving an illusion of life and a clear sense of mechanical control. (Bergson, 1993) Bergson traces the origin of this situational comedy already in children's games, such as jack-in-the-box. Bergson uncovers several elements (repetition of acts and phrases) in Moliere's plays that remind him of this game. Phrases in them are not so humorous for their importance, but for their high repetition. Another game is a marionette, which in turn is ridiculous, if it does not realize that it is only a puppet. The third child's play is a snowball that rolls downhill gaining volume — such as a series of indictments folded into one another remind Bergson of a rolling snowball. It is another mechanical element that is a cause of laughter.

9.4 Comical Characters

Bergson believes that the most humorous feature of characters is the already mentioned rigidity and routine. In this sense, it would be possible to say that each character is humorous, provided that it is understood as something complete in human personality, something that represents a mechanism residing in human beings that is able to function automatically. (Bergson, 1993)

Laughter, in Bergson's opinion, has critical, corrective and socialization function. It represents a kind of social act, which can rebuke and put shame on those who are unable to perceive the

freedom of creativity, constant variability and flexibility of reality. It embarrasses different social extremes and thus promotes health of the society. There is no need, however, to believe that laughter is something kind and good-natured. Its treatment, according to Bergson, consists precisely in the fact that laughter is heartless.

In context of Bergson's analysis of laughter it should be noted that it is not a frequently studied phenomenon. Humorous was mostly applied in the field of psychology and psychoanalysis. As perhaps the most famous, the work of Freud investigation *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious* may be mentioned, where he, like Bergson, examines child play and noted the social function of jokes, absurdity, and other such topics as Bergson. (Bilsker, 2005)

9.5 Scruton

In the 20th century the aesthetician Roger Scruton contributed to the debate on laughter. He agrees with Bergson that only a man can laugh— hyena's laughter cannot be changed by any of its effort to laugh. (Scruton, 2005) The intentionality of laughter in his opinion is not the same as intentionality of hyena's laughter or barking of a dog. Scruton indicates the difference between the case, when someone makes somebody else laugh and when one laughs at him — while the first situation is positive for the object of joyfulness, the second is not. People can make fun of animals, inanimate things etc., but these types of amusement are anthropomorphic. The object is examined through human optics — either as a human being, or as an expression of human thought and action. (Scruton, 2005) According to Scruton, if one does not feel comfortable, that he becomes the object of laughter, it is because laughter devalues the object in the eyes of the subject. Another feature of laughter in his opinion is that laughter and humour are inwardly focused. People constantly focus their attention outward. Maybe that's why we are discouraged by people without a sense of humour, because they are only interested in themselves (Scruton, 2005).

Laughter, like smile, which was analyzed in the previous chapter, permeates our everyday social functioning, and it is extremely important manifestation of our species.

Recommended Literature

BERGSON, H.: *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*. Arc Manor LLC, 2008.

10. Mass, Leader

keywords: *crowd, leader, mass, power*

The problem that cannot be overlooked in this overview, and which is also related to group unification, which was dealt with in the previous chapter on the social role of laughter — is the topic of the crowd, or mass (most authors, whether in philosophy, psychology, sociology, etc. use these terms interchangeably). The crowd and its function is very strong phenomenon in many respects.

10.1 Mass, Mass Society

Spanish thinker O. Gasset differentiated the terms of crowd and mass — in his opinion, while a crowd could be understood as a quantitative term, it is quality that comes to the forefront in case of a mass. What was originally a quantity — a crowd — is transformed into quality: that is the monotony, a person that is not different from other people and only repeats in him an ancestral type. (Gasset, 1993) Jaspers defined mass in his book *The Spiritual Condition of the Age* as a memberless crowd of people present in the same situation, who in their efficiency become a unity. (Jaspers, 2008)

Mass is not necessarily characterized by aggressiveness and the level of education of its members does not play a crucial role (Arendt, 1996). All individual skills are lost in a mass and actions of each member are oriented in one direction — towards a common goal. A mass consists of educated people, people with

above-average intelligence and those, whose cognitive abilities are limited. According to psychologist Le Bon, one of the first researchers in the field of mass psychology, a mass is unable to produce acts that require higher intelligence. (Le Bon, 2009)

Mass society is a space for presentation of the weaker; therefore, it is so appealing — an individual in a crowd gains confidence that he is a part of a larger number of people; that he lives for a common idea or goal. An individual inside a mass is anonymous, so he easily loses the sense of responsibility and may be carried away by instinctive acts. Any idea or action that appears in a crowd is contagious — according to Le Bon, it is an influence of so-called mental infection. It is anonymity and mental infection, which are the most evident characteristics of a crowd.

The third characteristic is the suggestibility — susceptibility towards adopting foreign ideas. Conscious personality disappears; all thoughts are focused in the direction of a crowd. Mass man is not subject to rationality, but instinct. Another characteristic feature is the simplification of feelings — mixed feelings, uncertainty and doubt have no place here. Since the mass is always oriented in one direction, it does not create a space for debate, dissent and resistance. (LeBon, 2008)

According to Arendt, masses were born from a much atomized society where antagonistic structure and loneliness of the individual associated with it was mitigated by membership in a party. The main feature of a mass man is not brutality and rawness, but loneliness and lack of normal social relations. (Arendt, 1996) People are willing to organize, if they are driven forward by a vision of better life. A mass pursues its goal more vigorously than an individual alone. The original idea is often lost in a large group of people and one only participates in life along with the rest of a mass, an individual loses his “self” with all its individual features. By these characteristics masses become a suitable tool for totalitarian movements (see Chapter 11). Mass control is the goal of every totalitarian plan. As noted by Arendt, totalitarian movement finds its

breeding ground where masses tend to organize politically for any reason. (Arendt, 1996) The principle of subjugation of individuals is simple — the more people are able to sway, the fewer opponents they have to eliminate. Only a strong individual who can act as an authority is capable of earning sympathy of a crowd.

10.2 Leader

One of the typical characteristics of group thinking is the presence of a strong authority. A man who stands above the masses of people is appointed a leader. As noted by Arendt, his place is in the heart of the movement and he is not only a source, but also the momentum of the movement. (Arendt, 1996) A leader is a person who influences a crowd and asserts his authoritative status. He is the proprietor of the propaganda by which he becomes the officer of the controlled masses — the crowd is a flock which cannot do without a master. (LeBon, 2008) Leader is a hero who the crowd applauds and recognizes him boundlessly. He chooses those who listen to him, trust him, are subject to his influence and fulfil his orders — so he necessarily chooses average people. (Popper, 1994)

A leader is the source of motion and strength of the movement, this exceptional position, however, is also responsible for the actions of the group: the task is to clarify, explain and justify any action, and at the same time to maintain its attractiveness and to act as magical protection of the movement. (Arendt, 1996) Leaders often do not remain attractive only during their tenure, but also long after, even after their death (Stalin, Hitler, etc.). Le Bon also mentions the following features of a leader — irritability, unbalance, sacrificing a family, inhibited survival instinct, the ability to evoke faith (religious, political) and despotism.

M. Weber identified three sources of leadership authority:

1. rational authority — based on the belief that the leader is a representative of legitimate regulations and laws

2. traditional authority — based on the belief in the importance of tradition
3. charismatic authority — is the consequence of leader's character (Hayes, 1998).

An interesting research was carried out in 1939 by Lewin, Lippitt and White, who compared the different leadership styles of activity groups for boys. One group had a leader, whose style was dominated by autocratic style — he was focused on tasks, he acted strictly and controlled boys excessively. The second was a democratic leader; he was interested in the members of his group and discussed everything with them. The third group was led by a leader, whose leadership style could be described as “laissez-faire” and he often let boys to do what they wanted.

Of course, research has shown that different types of leadership accomplished different results, while the authors of each experiment after some time exchanged leaders in order to avoid the possibility that the cause of different results are personalities of boys. The results remained the same — the boys from the group of the autocratic leader were hard working, but as soon as he moved away from the room, they completely stopped working and they required constant monitoring. They were not team-workers and behaved selfishly, they focused only on their own role and they did not help others.

The group with a democratic leader worked gladly and continued working even when the leader went away. They helped each other and showed interest in what others were doing. The “laissez-faire” group members hardly worked at all, they were rather bored and wondered about. (Hayes, 1998)

In conclusion, we can define a leader as a person who is perceived by the group as its integral part

- he has the characteristics and opinions held by the group as a whole
- he must be a role model for group members
- he must be perceived by the group as someone who helps to

achieve its objectives

- he must represent the group positively (Hayes, 1998).

Recommended Literature

LE BON, G.: *Psychology of Crowds*. Sparkling Book, 2009.

11. Propaganda

keywords: *propaganda, totalitarianism, altruism*

In the following chapter we introduce a tool that is used by society, especially a totalitarian one (this does not apply only to totalitarianism, since propaganda — a tool, which shall be discussed, is used by people in their daily communication with their surroundings without being aware of it).

11.1 What is Propaganda?

Propaganda (from lat. propagate — to spread) is a type of social influence, in addition to training, advertising, indoctrination and mind control.

Education is based on a temporary voluntary relationship and utilizes a method of mentoring and persuasion. Ideally, the goal of education is a creative individual with critical thinking.

Advertising is characterized by manipulation and instruction; the pieces of information it uses are carefully chosen and many are omitted, therefore advertising is somewhat deceptive. It intercedes and persuades. Its aim is to sell the advertised goods. (Koukolík, 2008)

Propaganda is persuasion by certain authority (church, state, political party, etc.), and is usually exaggerating; it may or may not lie.

Indoctrination is used to obtain consent of indoctrinated party by coercion and punishment. Its aim is the creation of internally cohesive group.

Mind control is characterized by an authoritarian attitude of controlling party (group leader), and this tool uses deliberate lies and unethical control of influenced persons. The aim of the mind control is the creation of a coherent and absolutely obedient group (“community of believers” in destructive cults, terrorist unit, etc.).

It was mentioned that social influence (mostly propaganda) is significantly present in totalitarian societies.

11.2 Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism may be characterized as authoritarian or legislative enforcement — violent and non-violent — control of all areas of social life through bureaucratic apparatus and coercive judicial and political power. The distortion of an individual occurs — the regime seeks to completely (totally) subdue or silence a person. Totalitarianism (totalitarian) regime is based on a total state enforcement of state ideology or power in all areas, often by violent and lawless methods. Main features of totalitarianism:

- infallibility of autocracy ideology
- ruling party or ruling coalition
- direct or covert control over the entire economic life
- media demagoguery
- surveillance of citizens, political control, use of repressive and terrorist funding.

The aim of totalitarian rule is a radical reform of society. It is based on the idea that society is transformable without restrictions. Through external means, such as state propaganda and violence, it intentionally inflicts on the psyche of the individual and his freedom. The culmination of the human freedom suppression is represented by the example of Nazi concentration camps. As Arendt states, their role was not only in the extermination of people and humiliation of human beings, but also to serve as a ghastly experiment in order to remove, under scientifically controlled conditions,

spontaneity itself as an expression of human behaviour and to turn the human personality into a common thing. (Arendt, 1996)

11.3 Features of Propaganda

Propaganda as the main instrument of totalitarianism would be dysfunctional without the four key features:

- simplicity
- appealing to emotions
- addressing of imagination
- repetition

11.4 Techniques of Propaganda

When addressing a selected population, propaganda uses a wide range of tools:

“Labelling” (“pigeonholing”) — a kind of emotionally focused short phrase that expresses the alliance of individuals, nations, groups, to the negative symbol. The “label” (atheist, fool gypsy, moron, shamus, Nazi, commie, nigger, fagot, joker, Yid, etc.) deprives the “labelled” object of its uniqueness, identity, purpose; people do not think about what kind of person is the “labelled” individual, what he says, what he does, why he does. The label helps to create a member of suspected group, the enemy. Label is a source of isolation and condemnation.

While “label” binds a group to a negative symbol, **halo** (also necessary for propaganda) binds to the positive symbol (god, democracy, love, mother, truth, freedom, science, art, belief). The purpose of labelling is to reject, the purpose of halo is to accept the message without thinking about it. Using labels and halo depends on the context (contemporary, ideological, political, etc.).

Euphemisms — concise, emotionally charged words, aiming to reach out to the population either to appease or to rouse. Euphemisms

make reality more attractive and sublime — *The Department of Defence, slimming diet, smoothing, etc.*

Transfer — utilization of authority and symbol — *Star of David, love and truth, people, Allah, Yahweh, Lord, etc.*

Celebrities are famous or favourite personalities, who may advertise company products, perform in election campaigns, express their opinion in various areas of culture — politics, economics, health, art, etc., although they usually have a very superficial knowledge about them. Their relevance in the process of spreading propaganda is obvious — people like them, cheer them and follow them.

Common man — is a popular mask of politicians, entrepreneurs, celebrities, who are acting as a simple man. In media we can see them in the most ordinary situations — washing dishes, caressing children and pets, wearing pants, caring for their family and country, etc. They often undergo some sort of acting course and image makers are an integral part of their lives .

One family — this propaganda tool carries a message — *we are in the same boat or all for one and one for all*. As Koukolík states, sporting events, concerts, theatre performances processions, rallies, marches are organized for this purpose. (Koukolík, 2008) People taking part in these activities are in the same boat for something and against something. They chant, sing, use the same colour coding, clap, whistle and wave flags.

Fear — in the utilization of fear as tool of propaganda the process begins by the announcement of the threat and then proceeds to a recommendation how to act in such situation; citizens understand that with the recommended solution they can manage the risk and are able to act accordingly. The more one fears, the more one engages in a variety of preventive actions, training, etc. (Koukolík, 2008)

Other, equally useful and powerful tools of propaganda, include: distractions (*it's no big deal, it is over; let's not open old wounds, etc.*), the choice of appropriate information (*people still do not know everything*), defamation (for example, one of the most

proven rules in politics is that if you want win the campaign, defame your opponent with something new, sensational and do not bother with political analysis at all), the exception to the rule (purpose is that the object of propaganda becomes convinced that the exception to the rule is the rule), nonverbal communication (eye contact, face to face, posture, etc.). “bombing” (flooding of the media with reports, commentaries and articles that are meant to prepare public for a revolutionary information), the qualifying language (factual information *XY said: it rained, yesterday* can be adjusted as needed by propagandistic qualifying language to *XY exclaimed: it rained, yesterday*), disinformation and opinion polls (manipulative and deceptive — the public does not know who ordered the survey, the exact wording of the questions, the size and composition of the sample, the survey method, etc.).

Recommended Literature

SUSSMAN, R.W., CLONINGER, C.R.: *Origins of Altruism and Cooperation*, Springer, 2011.

12. Dissolution of Human Groups

keywords: *genocide, politicide, ethnocide*

In the last chapter we focus on examining social groups and particular reasons why they dissolve, why violence, intergroup conflicts, wars and genocide occurs in them. But let us describe first the division of groups in terms of social psychology:

12.1 Criteria for Group Classification

- according to number of members — small group (members know each other, the group of up to 30 members), large group (a large number of people who are connected by something)
- degree of influence on personality — primary group (close relationships, family, satisfaction of needs), secondary group (based on formal relationship, sports teams, working groups, etc.).
- according to a way of formation — formal group (constituted by fixed rules, with a purpose), informal (based on personal relationships)
- by relation to the group — reference group (an individual belongs to a group and identifies with it), non-reference group (the group to which the individual does not belong)

The characteristics of the group are: stability, consistency, attractiveness, autonomy, size, homogeneity, degree of satisfaction degree of control, degree of intimacy, integration.

We identify different roles played by each of members in the group:

- ALFA — informal leader of the group; the most active member; accepted by the majority of group members
- BETA — expert who has the ability to propose solutions to problems
- GAMA — members who identify with the leader; they are largely passive and adaptive
- OMEGA — outsider, mostly unpopular
- P — “scapegoat”

12.2 Altruism

Human society differs from other communities of living beings, *inter alia*, by extraordinary degree of cooperation among genetically unrelated individuals (even in large groups). The biological altruism, which is known to other social animals, as well, shall be discussed first. Organism behaves altruistically, if its action has a cost (energy, time, food, money) and in the same time others prosper from such action. As Koukolík states (2006), all forms of life may behave altruistically probably — for example, vampires, which regularly regurgitate blood to members of their colony that were unsuccessful during night hunt or macaques that issue alarm signals and put themselves at risk, etc.

Biological altruism was examined by two different theories — Hamilton’s theory of kin selection (1964) and Trivers and Maynard–Smith’s theory of reciprocal altruism (1971). Both of these theories undermined the impact of Darwinian hypothesis of group selection. Hamilton’s theory assumes the existence of a gene (or genes) that makes its bearer to behave altruistically. Then organisms that lack this gene are selfish. Altruistic gene reduces the biological fitness of its bearer, but it increases the biological fitness of their relatives. (Koukolík, 2006) Trivers’s theory of reciprocal altruism refers to the unrelated individuals. According to Trivers,

altruistic behaviour can be useful if it can be expected in the future that the service shall be redeemed somehow. In humans, however, a much higher rate of non-relational altruism is present than in other social organisms — and this is true not only for the contemporary man, but also for a hunter-gatherer society with its common hunting, wars, collective leadership, sharing food, etc. (Koukolík, 2006) Human cooperation can be defined as behaviour that includes personnel costs for joint action that benefits other members of one’s group, the benefits outweigh the costs. (On the subject of cooperation and altruism, see Hamilton, WD: The genetic evolution of social behaviour I and II, 1964; Trivers, RL The evolution of reciprocal altruism, 1971)

However, it seems that even the theory of kin selection, or Trivers’s theory of reciprocal altruism do not explain human cooperation, the latest research are more inclined toward so-called theory of strong reciprocity (Fehr, 2005). The results are tested functional imaging methods, and show that in human cooperation cognitive, language and emotional variables are greatly applied, which enable the formulation of general standards of social behaviour, the development of social institutions; as well as psychological capacity that allows the internalization of social standards, a sense of belonging to a group (e.g.: ethnicity) and language behaviour. (Koukolík, 2006)

Human cooperation is also tested by different variations of games such as the prisoner’s dilemma. Classic game looks like this — Person A and Person B are arrested in separate cells and unable to communicate; the investigator does not have sufficient evidence, so he visits both prisoners and suggests to each of them that if they confess and the accomplice remained silent, they will be released and the accomplice will be sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. If they remain silent and the accomplice confesses, they will be sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and the accomplice will be released. If nobody confesses, they will both be sentenced to 6 months imprisonment and if both confess they will both be

sentenced to 6 years imprisonment. Inmates have the option to cooperate and to deny, or to act crookedly and confess. In the game with only one-round, it is always the most optimal solution to act crookedly. Prisoner's dilemma belongs to the so-called theory of games, a discipline that is dedicated to "... *study and strategic analysis of rational behaviour of individuals and their interactions in the (social) environment.*" (Démuth, 2013) "*The object of study is to understand, explain and predict the results of a possible interaction of the individual with the environment, where it is assumed that the intent of the individual can be modified by rational behaviour of another individual or the environment, whose expressions are also rational and calculable.*" (Demuth, 2013)

The question of why individuals cooperate together was discussed in Chapter 3 and partially in the previous chapter, as well, yet there is an unanswered question of how and why it happens that individuals in the social group do not cooperate together to the extent that the group ceases to exist. An interesting hypothesis is a reflection on settlers of Mangareva, Pitcairn and Henderson Islands, which was described by Koukolík (1997). Henderson has the size of about 36 km²; there is no source of drinking water, very little fertile soil and volcanic glass or other material of which it would be possible to produce solid tools is absent. Originally the island was rich in fish, shellfish, birds and turtles. Colonizers brought a variety of plants to this island. Approximately 50 people inhabited this island. Pitcairn is an inactive volcano of 4.6 km² and is located about 180 km from Henderson. Settlers of both islands were in contact for several centuries — they exported birds from Henderson and volcanic stone from Pitcairn. Mangareva is about 400 km from these islands and the first colonizers of Henderson came from here around the year 1000. Population of Mangareva gradually began to grow. They cut down trees, so the land was affected by erosion and the same happened at Pitcairine, while inhabitants of Henderson exterminated all the birds and turtles. The war accompanied by cannibalism broke out on Mangareve, as a result of imbalance

between resources and needs of the population. In the mid-15th century the barter between the islands ceased to exist. Only inhabitants of Mangareve survived; the last people on Pitcairn and Henderson islands died around the year 1600. (Koukolík, 1997)

What happened here? Why these human populations died out? The reasons for the demise of human groups may be various — for example, if the number of group members drops below a certain level, sooner or later there is a sexual intercourse between close relatives, which would increase the number of hereditary diseases in subsequent generations. the reason for the disappearance of a group may be an unfavourable climate change and long-term social isolation (in this case the members of the group suffering of "cabin fever" go insane). Another reason may be the inability to adapt. (Koukolík, 1997)

Koukolík states that even if the people of Henderson and Pitcairn avoided pitfalls described above, they would have to deal with the most significant risk — a necessary survival of a certain number of group members (this fact does not concern only human populations). If the number of members of a species drops below a certain level, the species dies out. In the case of humans it is the smallest number of individuals who are able to pass not only their genes, but also cultural tradition (mem) and the quantity of 50 specimens appears as low. For example, the original population of Tasmania was about five thousand individuals and managed to survive ten millennia. But gradually they lost the abilities known to them when they colonized the island; they ceased to develop until the Australian Aborigines exceeded them in everything. Archaeologist Rhys Jones said that small societies do not die out only from lack of food, but also the lack of people.

12.3 Dissolution of Groups by War and Genocide

Genocide (genocidium) may be defined as a partial or complete extermination of a group of people, or their mental or physical harm

in order to destroy it. This happens mostly for religious, racial, national, or political reasons. According to the international conventions genocide is any of the following crimes when committed with intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group:

1. killing members of the group
2. severe physical or mental harm to members of the group
3. measures to prevent childbearing in the group
4. forced migration of children from one group to another

The creator of the concept of genocide is Raphael Lemkin, a lawyer of Polish–Jewish origin, who dealt with the extermination of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in 1915 (the term genocide was used in 1944 for describing the Nazi killings in Europe). Genocide in history so far was orchestrated by more than 40 countries (the most noted genocides in the history include: the genocide of Armenians (1915–1917), the genocide perpetrated by the Soviet Union during Stalin’s government, the genocide perpetrated by Nazi Germany in the occupied countries, the Cambodian genocide, the Rwandan genocide, the so-called “ethnic cleansing” in the former Yugoslavia between the Serbs and the Bosnians).

One of the most detailed philosophical analysis of violence as a social groups instrument was submitted by H. Arendt. In her essay *On Violence* she pointed out that it seemed as if the phenomenon of violence actually did not raise any special attention — for example, in the Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, there was no entry regarding this topic mentioned, and in the history and politics, violence always played an important role. (Arendt, 2004) According to Arendt, it appears that violence is the most blatant manifestation of power. But does one understand power? Power is a tool (e.g.: of government); according to Voltaire, power consists in making others to act as one wants; in M. Weber’s opinion, power is an opportunity to assert one’s own will against the resistance. Arendt sharply differentiates notions of power, individual strength, force, authority and violence. Power, according to Arendt’s definition, corresponds to the human ability to comply, it is not the ability of

an individual, but it belongs to whole group — it exists only as long as the group stays together. In her opinion, when it is ascertained that some person has power, actually it means that the person is delegated to power and he acts in name of a specific group. At the moment when the group, which granted power to the person, is dissolved, the delegated person loses his power, as well. (Arendt, 2004)

Individual power (strength) — represents the power of an individual that is independent in relation to others; naturally, individual power of the strongest individual can always be overpowered by a group of many (who unite precisely in order to overcome the independent person). Strength — this term is associated with “natural force” or energy that is released by physical movements. Authority — is attributed either to individuals (parent, teacher), or to ministry and church. It is characterized by undoubted recognition by all those who are required to obey without coercion or persuasion. The greatest antagonists of authority are scorn and laughter (mockery). Violence — is instrumental in nature; it is close to the individual strength. (Arendt, 2004) Arendt points out that the government based solely on the means of violence does not exist, even totalitarian ruler needs a certain power base — a network of secret police and informers. Therefore, the essence of government is power, but not violence. When it comes to direct conflict of power and violence — the outcome is usually predetermined — bloodshed and large quantity of victims. Arendt provides an example of Gandhi’s strategy of nonviolent resistance — if his approach of dealing with conflicts occurred in Stalin’s Russia or Hitler’s Germany, the result would be bloodshed and not a relatively peaceful accession to decolonization. The government, which is managed exclusively by violence is appropriate only in case that it loses its power. (Arendt, 2004) Arendt does not agree with the theories of biologists, ethnologists and other evolutionarily oriented scientists who interpret the violence in human groups as instinctive driving force that serves for adaptation and survival. She is rather inclined to believe that it is an irrational and hardly excusable behaviour.

Of course, the biological basis of human aggression does not automatically lead to the conclusion that violent behaviour cannot be changed. Violence is obviously used in cases when it pays off. However, when aggression is not able to provide high profits, such antisocial behaviour is rare. (Dunbar, Barrett, Lycett, 2007)

Ethnologist K. Lorenz in his book *Civilized Man's Eight Deadly Sins* provides a list of sins –both the sins against nature and contribution to its own disappearance (extinction of all social groups).

The eight deadly sins of K. Lorenz include:

- overpopulation — this fact really forces us to excess of social contacts which results in tremendous strain on individuals who live in large numbers in a small area
- environmental devastation — alienation from nature resulted in the decline of human ethical and aesthetic sensibilities
- competition of a man with himself — people are in a constant competition with competitors and they lose self–reflection, one of the most important skills of human beings
- extinction of strong emotions — mankind is getting softer — thanks to technology, medicine; consequentially mankind, for example, loses its ability to experience a great joy that follows after a hardship or great suffering; a individual finds himself in a constant feeling of boredom
- genetic decline — Lorenzo related this fact to a prevalence of social parasites
- dismissal of traditions — disintegration of the traditional family; intergenerational misunderstanding and misperceptions
- indiscrimination to doctrines — leads to uniformity and loss of individuality; the individual becomes easier to manipulate, more susceptible to succumbing to authority, ideologies, advertising, etc.
- proliferation of weapons of mass destruction — leads to definite destruction of society as a whole, although this risk can be easily removed. (Lorenz, 2001)

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