

# Approaches: Psychological

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# Agenda

- Practical points
- Student presentation
- Basic tenets of the psychological approach
- An example: Kahneman
  - Gain or loss
  - Sunk costs
  - Endowment effects
- Discussion of readings



# Practical points

- Class representative
  - Attends the Staff-Student Liaison Committee (week 5 or 6) to represent the views of students in the class
  - Your choice of how and who to select
- Essay discussion
  - Due at 12:00 on Friday 21 October
  - Upload to Myplace, where you can also find information and possible questions
  - Let me know if you would like to propose your own essay question
  - Any questions?



# Basic tenets of the psychological approach(es)

- Biases in human perception
  - (Duffy 2019, Landy et al. 2018)
- Biases in human reasoning
  - (Kahneman 2003, Simon 1985)
- System 1 (fast) and System 2 (slow)
  - (Kahneman 2011, Marcus et al. 2012)
- Importance of group identity
  - (Tajfel 1982, Tajfel and Turner 1979)
- Importance of underlying beliefs
  - (Such as system justification, Jost et al. 2009)



THINKING,  
FAST AND SLOW



DANIEL  
KAHNEMAN

An example:  
Kahneman



# Kahneman: Gain or loss

600 people are expected to die:

- If program A is adopted, 200 people will be saved.
- If program B is adopted, there is a one third probability that 600 people will be saved and a two-thirds probability that no people will be saved.

Or:

- If program A is adopted, 400 people will die.
- If program B is adopted, there is a one-third probability that nobody will die and a two-thirds probability that 600 people will die.



Either:

A woman has bought two \$80 tickets to the theater. When she arrives at the theater, she opens her wallet and discovers that the tickets are missing. Will she buy two more tickets to see the play?

Or:

A woman goes to the theater, intending to buy two tickets that cost \$80 each. She arrives at the theater, opens her wallet, and discovers to her dismay that the \$160 with which she was going to make the purchase is missing. She could use her credit card. Will she buy the tickets?

# Kahneman: Sunk costs



# Kahneman: Endowment effects

Three groups were given different rewards for participating in an experiment:

- 'Sellers' were given a mug
- 'Choosers' were given the option of a mug or some money
- 'Buyers' were asked to price the trade value their neighbour's mug

Mug values:

- 'Sellers': \$7.12
- 'Choosers': \$3.12
- 'Buyers': \$2.87





# Essential reading overview

**Darley and Batson** use a field experiment to show that hurry is the most important variable, rather than helping norms or type of religiousness, in defining whether seminary students offered help to the stranger or not.

**Gidron and Hall** use ISSP data to show a (non-causal) relationship between relational subjective social status and support for populist right parties (and attitudes associated with the populist right), and a (suggestive) relationship between declined subjective social status and such support.

**Hamlin and Jennings** argue that expressive behaviour derives direct benefit from its meaning or symbolic significance, is understood in relation to an audience (may be one's self, and may be prospective), and may reveal 'true' preferences depending on the context (promoting expressive, instrumental, or all-things-considered decisions).

**Oser and Hooghe** identify five groups with distinct democratic values, and find that political rights adherents are the most active in both institutionalised and non-institutionalised participation, followed by uniform high ideals adherents, then social rights adherents, uniform medium ideal adherents, and finally uniform low ideal adherents.



# Group discussion

- In a random order, each group chooses two questions from the handout, which is available via [Myplace](#) (L2929 > Week 3 – Approaches: Psychological)
- Each group discusses their questions and summarises the discussion on padlet, including any uncertainties or questions about the ideas, concepts or arguments:
  - <https://padlet.com/joegreenwoodhau/L2929>
- At least one group member should be prepared to feed back



# References

- Bobby Duffy (2019), *The Perils of Perception: Why We're Wrong About Nearly Everything* (London, Atlantic Books).
- Daniel Kahneman (2003), 'A Perspective on Judgement and Choice: Mapping Bounded Rationality', *American Psychologist*, Vol. 58, No. 9, pp. 697-720.
- Daniel Kahneman (2012), *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (London, Penguin Books).
- David Landy, Brian M. Guay and Tyler Marghetis (2018), 'Bias and ignorance in demographic perception', *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*, Vol. 25, No. 5, pp. 1606-1618.
- John T. Jost, Aaron C. Kay and Hulda Thorisdottir (2009), *Social and Psychological Bases of Ideology and System Justification* (Oxford, Oxford University Press).
- George E. Marcus, W. Russell Neuman and Michael MacKuen (2012), *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgement* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press).
- Herbert A. Simon (1985), 'Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 79, No. 2, pp. 293-304.
- Henri Tajfel (1982), 'Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations', *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 33, pp. 1-39.
- Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner (1979), 'An integrative theory of inter-group conflict' chapter in William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of inter-group relations* (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole), pp. 33-47.