

## SENSURVEILEDNING

<b>Emnekode og navn:</b> PSY2014/PSYPRO4314	<b>Semester / År / Eksamenstype:</b> Spring/2021/ Written home examination: from 2021-06-08 from 12.00 to 2021-06-11 at 12.00
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### Instructions to students:

**Choose 1 of the (2 presented) assignments. Respond to both parts of the chosen assignment. The assignment can be responded to in English or a Scandinavian language.**

**Note that your overall response may include up to a maximum of 3000 words (any additional text will be disregarded).**

**It is expected that you respond to the chosen assignment by using several theoretical perspectives and reflect and relate to the presented tasks. Just listing summed up texts relating to the literature is not sufficient.**

**Copy and paste from any source is not allowed, this includes own or others' preparation materials.**

**Present names of theories or models and/or authors, as well as relevant publication year in the text, but do not include a reference list.**

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### Assignments:

#### Assignment 1

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, media and politicians around the world have informed people about the current health situation and sometimes suggested that it is 'just a few more months before it's over'.

- a) Discuss how language-related psychological factors may influence people's perceptions based on course papers by Fausey & Boroditsky (2010), Loftus and Palmer (1974), and others.
- b) Give examples of social psychology theories that could help predict individual reactions and behaviours in relation to a widespread and continuous pandemic.

#### Assignment 2

The past year has presented substantial changes to people's lives, including salient threats to life and health, severe social restrictions, digitalization of communication, and social unrest. The new life situations have included stress and traumatic experiences as well as displays of endurance and novel forms of empathy and reaching out to others.

- a) Discuss how a social situation of restrictions and uncertainty may affect an individual's self-experience and feelings based on the course literature by Swann and Bossom (2010), Zajonc (1998) and others.
- b) Based on the course literature, discuss how communication efforts, social stigmatization processes, and social justice beliefs may have been affected by the situations caused by Covid-19 pandemic.



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**Relevant course literature:**

**SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY 2**

**PSY2014/PSYPRO4314 (7,5 STUDIEPOENG SPRING 2021)**

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50, 179 – 211.

Chen, S. X., & Bond, M. H. (2010) Two languages, two personalities? Examining language effects on the expression of personality in a bilingual context. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 36(11), 1514-1528.

Cialdini, R. B. (1995). Principles and techniques of social influence. In Abraham Tesser (Ed.), *Advanced Social Psychology*, Chapter 7 (pp.257-281). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Crocker, J., Major, B., & Steele, C. (1998). Social stigma. In Daniel T. Gilbert, Susan T. Fiske and Gardner Lindzey (Eds.), *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, Vol. II., 4th ed., (pp. 504-553). Boston, Massachusetts: McGraw Hill.

Fausey, C. M., & Boroditsky, L. (2011) Who dunnit? Cross-linguistic differences in eye-witness memory. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 18, 150-157.

Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. (1991). Social inferences. In Susan T. Fiske and Shelley, E. Taylor (Eds.), *Social Cognition* (2nd ed., Chapter 9, pp. 346-406). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Gygax, P., Gabriel, U., Sarrasin, O., Oakhill, J., & Garnham, A. (2008) Generically intended, but specifically interpreted: when beauticians, musicians, and mechanics are all men. *Language and Cognitive Processes*, 23(3), 464-485.

Hackman, J.R., & Katz, N. (2010). Group behavior and performance. In Susan T. Fiske, Daniel T. Gilbert, & Gardner Lindzey (Eds.), *The Handbook of Social Psychology* (5th edition, Vol. 2, pp. 1208-1251). Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley.

Howard, J. A., & Renfrow, D. D. (2006). Social cognition. In John Delamater (Ed.), *Handbook of Social Psychology* (Chapter 11, pp. 259-281). New York, NY: Springer Science + Business Media, LLC.

Krauss, R. M., & Fussel, S. R. (1996). Social psychological models of interpersonal communication. In E. Tory Higgins and Arie W. Kruglanski. *Social Psychology. Handbook of Basic Principles* (pp. 655-701). New York: The Guilford Press.

Loftus, E. F., & Palmer, J. C. (1974). Reconstruction of automobile destruction: an example of the interaction between language and memory. *Journal of Verbal Learning & Verbal Behavior*, 13(5), 585–589.

Rosenstock, I. M. (1974). Historical origins of the health belief model. *Health Education Monographs*, 2(4), 328-335.

Stern, P. C., Dietz, T., Abel, T., Guagnano, G. A., & Kalof, L. (1999). A value-belief-norm theory of support for social movements: The case of environmentalism. *Research in Human Ecology*, 6, 81–97.

Swann, W. B., & Bossom, J. K. (2010). Self and identity. In Susan T. Fiske, Daniel T. Gilbert & Gardner Lindzey (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Psychology* (5th ed., Vol. 1, pp. 589-628). New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Tyler, T. R., & Smith, H. J. (1998). Social justice and social movement. In Daniel T. Gilbert, Susan T. Fiske and Gardner Lindzey (Eds.), *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, Vol. II., 4th ed., (pp.595-629). Boston, Massachusetts: McGraw Hill.

Webber, D., Babush, M., Schori-Eyal, N., Vazeou-Nieuwenhuis, A., Hettiarachchi, M., Bélanger, J. J., Moyano, M., Trujillo, H. M., Gunaratna, R., Kruglanski, A. W., & Gelfand, M. J. (2018). The road to extremism: Field and experimental evidence that significance loss-induced need for closure fosters radicalization. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 114, 270-285.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000111>

Zajonc, R. B. (1998). Emotions. In Daniel T. Gilbert, Susan T. Fiske and Gardner Lindzey (Eds.), *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, Vol. I., 4th ed., (pp.591-632). Boston, Massachusetts: McGraw Hill.

**Eksamenskrav:/Guidance:**

Students may present one overall response to the two parts of the assignment or structure the response in the two parts a) and b). Both structures are acceptable. The course materials include several research areas which in turn present several theoretical perspectives and examples. It is not possible for the students to cover all aspects of the literature in the exam. Note also that only examples are presented in the evaluation guide related to the two assignments and that such materials could be relevant in either response. The evaluation should be based on how well the available literature is utilized in the response and, since there is a limit of 3000 words, also the shown ability to present central materials in a coherent manner that indicate understanding and reflections. If this is the case the top grade is achieved. If the response is solely focusing on one perspective or theory, even at length, or lists various materials without coherence or connection to the chosen assignment, then the exam is failed.

**Guidance to Assignment 1**

**Assignment 1**

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, media and politicians around the world have informed people about the current health situation and sometimes suggested that it is ‘just a few more months before it’s over’.

- a) Discuss how language-related psychological factors may influence people's perceptions based on course papers by Fausey & Boroditsky (2010), Loftus and Palmer (1974), and others.
- b) Give examples of social psychology theories that could help predict individual reactions and behaviours in relation to a widespread and continuous pandemic.

*General background for the evaluator*

Students are likely to start by defining language as a basis for their essay. Such a discussion should focus on languages being structures composed of sets of linguistic factors that provide a relatively rigid guideline by which meaning is communicated (Krauss & Chiu, 1997; reference not in literature list but mentioned at lecture). These guidelines define what, how, and to what level ideas and concepts can be communicated within each language (Krauss & Chiu, 1997), and have an incredibly strong effect on perception to the point where even subtle differences in the exact words used in explaining a concept, event, or idea can significantly impact upon meaning interpretation (Fausey & Boroditsky, 2010). It is likely that, as it was presented in the lecture on language and social cognition, students will discuss the importance of individual word choice in leading to accurate or inaccurate communication through the lens of meaning activation theory (e.g., Lévy, Gyga, & Gabriel, 2014; reference not in literature list but mentioned at lecture). Meaning activation theory broadly states that the processing of individual words within a sentence activate the semantic, morphological, and phonological features of those words (e.g., Lévy, Gyga, & Gabriel, 2014). The activation of these features allows for each individual word to be interpreted within the specific sentence that was used, as well as within the wider societal context within which the writer/speaker of the sentence exists (e.g., Lévy, Gyga, & Gabriel, 2014). This allows our brains to provide us with as much salient information as possible to inform memory and perception. If students use this background material, from the lecture but not in the literature, they should achieve some credit.

*Expected contents of answer:*

In answering part 1, students are likely to discuss firstly the level to which language affects perception and cognition (Gyga et al., 2008), secondly how differences between languages can affect perception (Fausey & Boroditsky, 2010; Gyga et al., 2008; Chen & Bond, 2010), and lastly how linguistic framing (differences in the specific language used to discuss a topic; e.g., Fausey & Boroditsky, 2010; Loftus & Palmer, 1974) can affect perception.

Discussions around the level to which language affects perception and cognition, if not grounded in meaning activation theory, are likely to be based around the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis as discussed in Gyga et al. (2008). The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is grounded in linguistic determinism and linguistic realism (Hardin & Banaji, 1993, as presented in Gyga et al., 2008). Linguistic determinism refers to how the structures of languages determine how we perceive the world, while linguistic relativism refers to how, since languages differ throughout the world, there must be different ways to perceive the world (Hardin & Banaji, 1993, as presented in Gyga et al., 2008). While the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis at its core holds that language entirely determines perception (as stated in Gyga et al., 2008), more recent research has moved to a weaker argument that language influences processes that are encoded through language, such as spatial reasoning

(Levinson et al, 2002, as presented in Gygax et al., 2008), memory (Fausey & Boroditsky, 2010; Loftus & Palmer, 1974), and attributions of blame (Fausey & Boroditsky, 2010), although there is evidence that linguistic processes are involved in perception and memory even if it isn't explicitly used (Fausey & Boroditsky, 2010).

Discussions of how differences between languages can affect perception are likely to focus on discussions of stereotypicality (Gygax et al., 2008), memory (Fausey & Boroditsky, 2010), and personality (Chen & Bond, 2010). In terms of stereotypicality, Gygax et al. (2008) found that, when examining gender stereotyped occupations, the social perception of speakers of grammatical gender languages such as German and French (where all nouns and pronouns are explicitly gendered, and where generic terms share the same form as the masculine specific in 99% of cases) is directly guided by the grammatical gender of the occupational title (i.e., seen as more acceptable for men even if the role is feminine stereotyped), while the social perception of speakers of non-gendered languages such as English directly follow gender stereotypes. In terms of memory, speakers of different languages may perceive and remember the same events differently (Fausey & Boroditsky, 2010), suggesting that perception and memory is susceptible to linguistic pattern differences between languages. In terms of personality, bilingual speakers exhibit different personality qualities based on the language they are speaking, believed to be due to activation of cultural norms of the group most associated with the language, especially in terms of prototypic trait profiles (Chen & Bond, 2010).

Linguistic framing refers to how differences in the specific wording used directly affects social perception and memory (e.g., Fausey & Boroditsky, 2010; Loftus & Palmer, 1974). In line with meaning activation theory, psycholinguistic research (Fausey & Boroditsky, 2010; Gentner & Loftus, 1979, as discussed in Fausey & Boroditsky, 2010; Loftus & Palmer, 1974) has found that the linguistic framing affects choices, decision making processes, and even memory, affecting perception both in the moment and in the longer term (Loftus & Palmer, 1974). For example, Fausey & Boroditsky (2010b, as reported in Fausey & Boroditsky, 2010) gives the example of English speakers who read a report about the Justin Timberlake & Janet Jackson 'wardrobe malfunction', where those who read a version that said that used the agentive phrasing that Justin 'tore the bodice' of Janet attributed more blame, and levied 53% more in fines, to Justin Timberlake compared to those who read the non-agentive phrasing that 'the bodice tore'. Further, Fausey & Boroditsky (2010) found that speakers of non-agentive languages such as Spanish attribute and remember blame related to accidents to a far lesser degree than speakers of agentive languages such as English, while Loftus and Palmer (1974) found that false memories (specifically, a false memory of glass breaking in a car crash) could be elicited through word use.

Regarding the second part of the assignment, how social psychology theories could help predict individual reactions and behaviours in relation to a widespread and continuous pandemic, the literature in the course offers various perspectives. These include central attitude theories presented in the course, the Health Belief Model (HBM; Rosenstock, 1974; a model developed to explain and predict health behavior change) or the Norm Activation Model (Schwartz, 1977; Stern et al., 1995; a model that focuses on altruistic and environmentally friendly behavior), and certainly the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1991, see figure below). The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975 mentioned at lecture) is also relevant, well, as well as the influence literature (Cialdini, 1995). Other parts of the course literature that could be included are, e.g. social cognition and/or social justice aspects, group behaviour and performance.

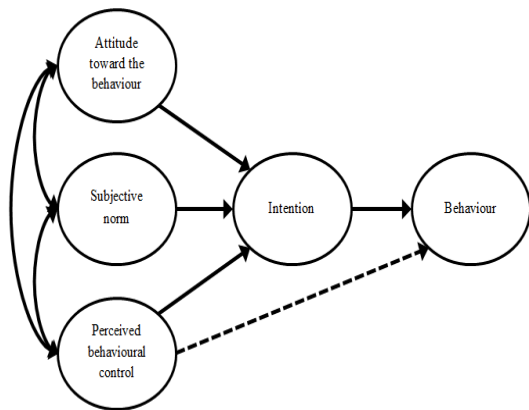


Fig. 1. Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

References to the Cialdini (1995) chapter may relate to his six main “weapons of influence” and how the situation or surrounding exerts pressure on an individual. They include reciprocity (a strong social norm to give back what one is due so as not to feel discomfort), consistency (we try to behave in ways that reflect our values or commitments and self-image), social proof (or social validation; that we chose to compare with similar others, especially if uncertain), liking (that we comply with friends and those we like), authority (to be guided by authorities or authoritative figures) and scarcity (that we try to secure whatever is perceived to be in low supply). The paper furthermore addresses the increasingly more subtle influence trends over time. Other types of group pressure effects, or behaviours in groups due to a pandemic, could be related to the Hackman and Katz (2010) chapter on “Group behavior and performance”. The chapter presents types of tasks in groups, attributes related to the purpose of groups, and effects on performances. It also includes mentioning of “group-think” processes and what to be aware of in such a context.

Social justice aspects (Tyler & Smith, 1998. The chapter: Social justice and social movement) may well be reflected on in the response, and predictions of individual reactions and behaviours could be related to how social justice concerns affect people’s feelings and attitudes, what criteria people use to evaluate social justice, how people behave in response to injustice and why and when people care about social justice. The chapter includes the theory or phenomenon of relative deprivation, and presents the research fields of distributive, procedural and retributive justice. The chapter could be a basis to reflect on reactions to rules as well as rule-breaking behavior.

Inclusion of social cognition aspects in the response may focus on effects on individuals’ perceptions, evaluations or inferences related to the pandemic situation through social categories or schemas (e.g. Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Social inferences). Such a perspective could also discuss stigmatization on the basis of stereotypes (overgeneralized beliefs) based on the chapter by Crocker, Major and Steele (1998; Social stigma).

### **Guidance to Assignment 2**

The past year has included substantial changes to people’s lives, including salient threats to life and health, severe social restrictions, digitalization of communication, and social unrest. The new life



situations have included stress and traumatic experiences as well as endurance and novel forms of showing empathy and reaching out to others.

a) Discuss how a social situation of restrictions and uncertainty may affect an individual's self-experience and feelings based on the course literature by Swann and Bossom (2010), Zajonc (1998) and others.

b) Based on the course literature, discuss how communication efforts, social stigmatization processes, and social justice beliefs may have been affected by the situations caused by Covid-19 pandemic.

*Expected contents of answer:*

Regarding the first part the Swann and Bossom (2010) chapter on "Self and identity" covers a variety of perspectives of how the self-concept and own experience may be affected by external influences, and how situations may influence one's perception of oneself (individual identity) as well as views and perceived influences from similar others or other groups. The Self-concept is described in the lecture (Baumeister, 1998, in suggested readings) as "an idea (or theory) about something – the entity to which the self-concept refers is the *Self*". Baumeister suggests three basic root phenomena of selfhood: a) The experience of reflexive consciousness (awareness of self), b) that the self is an interpersonal being (people learn who and what they are from other people, and always have identities as members of social groups) and c) that the self also is 'an executive function', i.e. an entity that makes choices and decisions, initiates action and takes responsibility; requires a capacity for self-regulation. All three "roots" could be mentioned and reflected upon in relation to the first part of the assignment. From Oysterman (2001) the students are told that the self-concept involves the three parts of content (self-relevant knowledge), structure (sets of schemas) and organization (of specific exemplars as well as schemas that do not necessarily present hierarchical structures).

The response may also include reflections on how metacognitive characteristics of self-knowledge, such as importance, stability, valence or clarity of self-knowledge, or frustration in pursuing goals, i.e. contingency of self-esteem involving the extent to which people base their self-worth on their ability to achieve specific outcomes, may be influenced by social restrictions and hinderances including social isolation, few or restricted personal communication situations, etc. The self-experience may thus be affected by scarce and/or ambiguous social feedback from others, including the own social group and other social groups, since the self-concept has the functions of self-evaluation and providing self-verification or self-consistency. Social restrictions could be related to loss of social/personal roles, e.g. work identity or similar. One could also reflect on possible effects on (changes in) perceptions of own and other groups regarding e.g. stereotyping, in-group bias, depersonalization and dehumanization tendencies. And there are possibilities to reflect on the lack of possibilities to sustain one's need for confirmation to verify or improve one's self-view, as well as effects from feeling isolated, e.g. the "need to belong" (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Responses may also consider different impacts on individual self-views or experiences due to western-eastern cultural frameworks that overall seem to place different emphasis on the importance of consistency and conformity.

Theoretical references could include Social identity theorists (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, -80s), the Symbolic interactionism perspective (e.g. Mead 1930s, influenced by W. James in the 1890s and Cooley, 1902 – seeing “me” as the accumulated understanding of “the generalized other”), Social comparisons (Festinger 1950s where choice of comparisons influence feelings as well as self-image etc.), Social identity theory (Taifel & Turner, 1979; Taifel, 1981), that social identities are building blocks of personal identities and therefore may be the more influential on the construction of the self. In addition, Self-categorization theory (Turner et al. 1980s; that suggests that the relationship between personal and social self-views/group identity is «hydraulic», and that entering a group means to start a ‘depersonalization’- process, meaning that ‘one-self’ becomes interchangeable with other group members), or Self-expansion theory (Aron & Aron, 1990s) involving how we incorporate others’ qualities in the self (also Baldwin, 1992; Andersen & Chen, 2002). Higgin’s regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1998, 2000s) might be mentioned since it suggests that a match between orientation to a goal and the means used to approach that goal produces a state of regulatory fit. Such a state creates both a feeling of rightness about the goal pursuit and increases task engagement. In addition, a motivational property of the self has been called “The self-enhancement motive” and involves the desire to maximize the positivity of one’s self-views (Leary, 2007). This aspect, that we want positive evaluations, may connect reflections around self-experience to the chapter on emotions by Zajonc (1998). The Swann and Bossom (2010) chapter also discusses “hybrid theories” which could be relevant to how a social situation of restrictions and uncertainty may affect an individual’s self-experience and feelings. These include Self-affirmation theory by Steele (1988), how people react when encountering challenges to the positive self, and Terror management theory (Solomon, Greenberg & Pyszczynski, 2004), that we try to avoid existential anxiety arising from awareness of own mortality by bolstering self-motives. They also mention Identity negotiation theory on identity development (Swann & Bosson, 2008).

The expectations related to Zajonc’s chapter include showing knowledge about the difference between basic emotion theorists (e.g. Tomkins, Izard, Zajonc) and cognitive theorists (e.g. Lazarus, Schachter & Singer, Frijda), and the former groups’ differentiation between pure or basic “emotions” and “affect” (mixed emotions). Zajonc calls any mixture of “basic emotion” (those that cannot be reduced, i.e. happiness, fear, surprise, anger, disgust, contempt) and cognitions *affect*. It could also be relevant to note that emotions relate to the dimension of approach/ avoidance, or positive-negative, whereas cognitions relate to the true/false dichotomy. In addition, there are many ways to use the emotion chapter to reflect on how a social situation of restrictions and uncertainty may affect an individual’s experiential situation. Such reflections could very well be closely connected to the discussion on effects of self-experience.

Although this first part primarily asks for how a situation of restrictions and uncertainty could affect an individual’s self-experience and feelings it would also be relevant if the response included reflections on influence, group pressure, social justice concerns, stigmatization or behaviour. For these aspects see other parts of this guide.

The second part of the assignment especially expects responses related to how the pandemic has affected communication efforts, social stigmatization and social (in)justice, but other perspectives are also possible.

Regarding communication one could reflect on the increased digitalization during the pandemic and effects on understanding *meaning* in interpersonal communication. Thus, an answer could include the varied definitions of “communication”, e.g. some positions define communication as the transmission of a “code” or agreed symbols (e.g. Wiener), and communication therefore becomes restricted to (symbolic) language. Other researchers make no distinction between symbolic or expressive (sign) signals (e.g. Watzlawick), a position that fails to distinguish between behavior more and less significant to communication. Still others define communication as informative, including information by signs and symbols (e.g. Ekman; Ekman & Friesen) with an emphasis on signs as the true information. Another approach may provide examples of the “communication models” in the chapter, which differ with respect to defining communication when it comes to where meaning is located. That is, located in the property of messages (Encoder-Decoder models; based on symbols as Wiener suggests), in the speaker’s intentions (Intentionalist models), in the addressee’s point of view (Perspective-Taking models) and in the participants’ joint activity (Dialogic models). The answer could also mention the two types of signals, signs and symbols, and how especially *signs* may be harder to interpret in situations that are different to actual face-to-face interactions. In depth explanations may describe a *symbol* as a signal that stands for, or *signifies*, something other than itself; as a product of social convention, e.g. letters, words, certain hand signals. Symbol use is learned behavior. A *sign* is another kind of signal with an *intrinsic relationship* to what it signifies; causally related in the same process, e.g. to blush when embarrassed, pupil contraction when frightened. Thus, signs are involuntary although some may be socially modified in relation to cultural norms.

In addition to what is mentioned above about social stigma an answer may involve that the concept often is defined as a socially constructed, negatively evaluated social identity within a certain context, i.e. to possess a specific attribute or characteristics that in a given context leads to social devaluation. The chapter by Crocker, Major & Steele (1998) points out *visibility* as one central dimension of stigma (non-concealable characteristics, e.g. gender, race, physical marks, etc. that others can be aware of, note, and judge. Such characteristics may influence thoughts, feelings and behavior). A second central dimension is *controllability* (when a condition or characteristic result from, or could be eliminated by, behavior of the person, i.e. when the individual is seen responsible for the stigmatizing condition). There are discussions and disagreement about the controllability of stigmatizing conditions but, generally, one can expect a more negative evaluation if a condition is perceived to be controllable.

Also in addition to what is mentioned above about a general answer related to social justice or injustice would mention that humans of all times have had ideas about how individuals, groups and societies should behave, and that such judgments lie at the heart of feelings, attitudes, and behaviors. The *Social exchange theory* could be mentioned (that justice “regulates” social interactions based on self-interest motivation and expectations that others will follow the rules, which leads to accepted systems for allocating resources) and/or the *Social identity theory* (that

distributive, procedural and retributive justice function as indicators of quality of social relationships). Furthermore, that different individual (personal-level) responses to injustice can include *not to act*, just accept (not denial, but out of loyalty or resignation, which often is associated with depression and physical stress, even self-destructive behavior), and *actions* such as to try to verify the injustice by gaining social support, to seek to restore fairness e.g. by economic compensation, or to retribute through “silence treatment”, absenteeism, or to do harm to perpetrator or others.

For the NTNU grading scale see: [Grading and credit system - NTNU](#)