

# Consumer culture in the peer context

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# Social behaviour in peer groups

Being kind

Disruptive  
behaviour

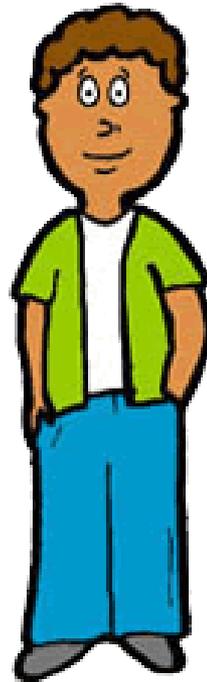
Peaceful conflict  
resolution

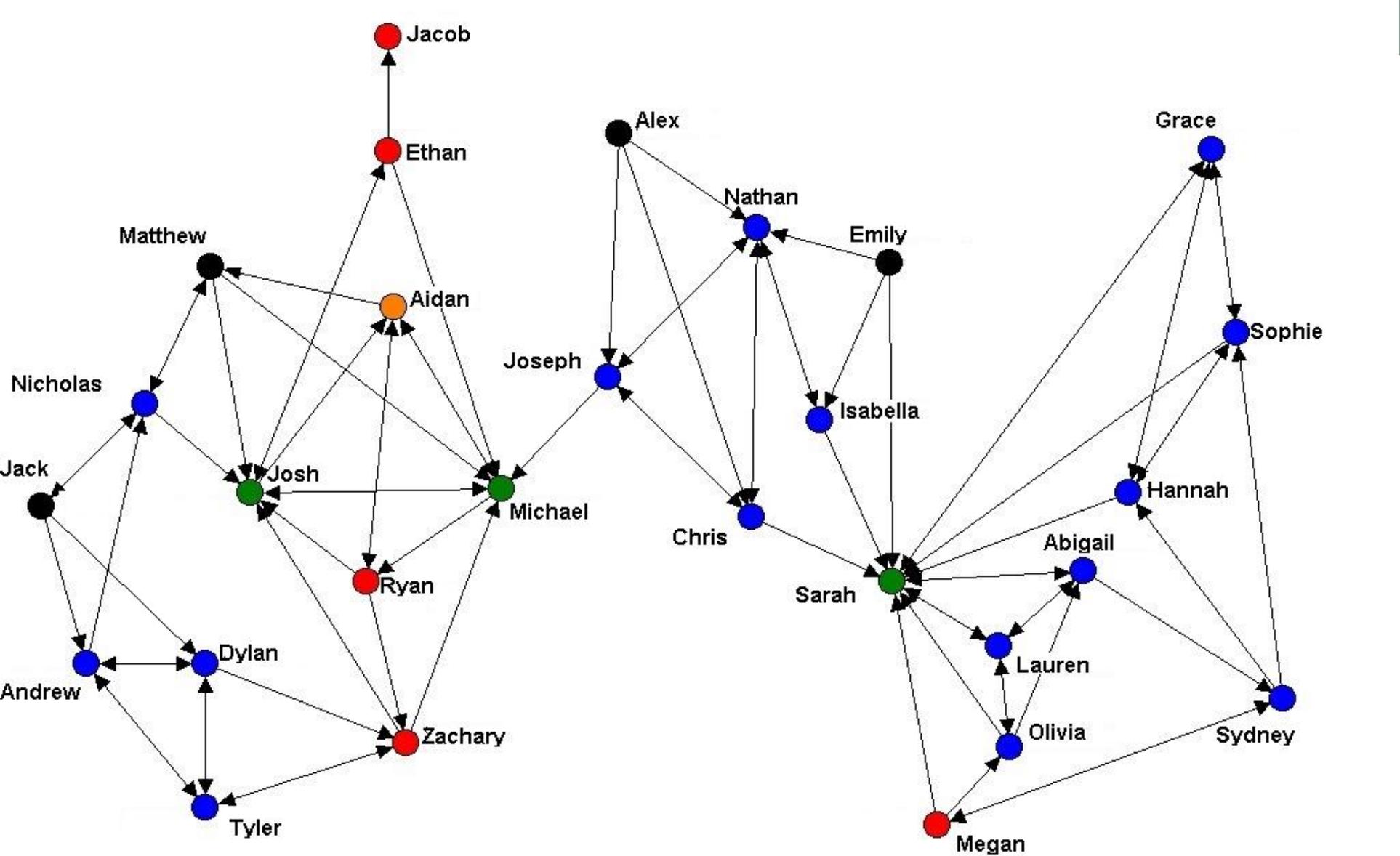
Aggression

Supporting others

Withdrawal

Leadership





● Popular Children	● Average Children	● Controversial Children
● Rejected Children	● Neglected Children	

# Managing your public image

- “the way in which the individual ... presents himself and his activity to others, [and] the ways in which he guides and controls the impression they form of him”  
Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959)
- we all do it to some extent, using:
  - the words we say
  - the way we behave
  - the appearance we craft
  - the material possessions we exhibit

# Goals of peer interaction

- Coordinated play



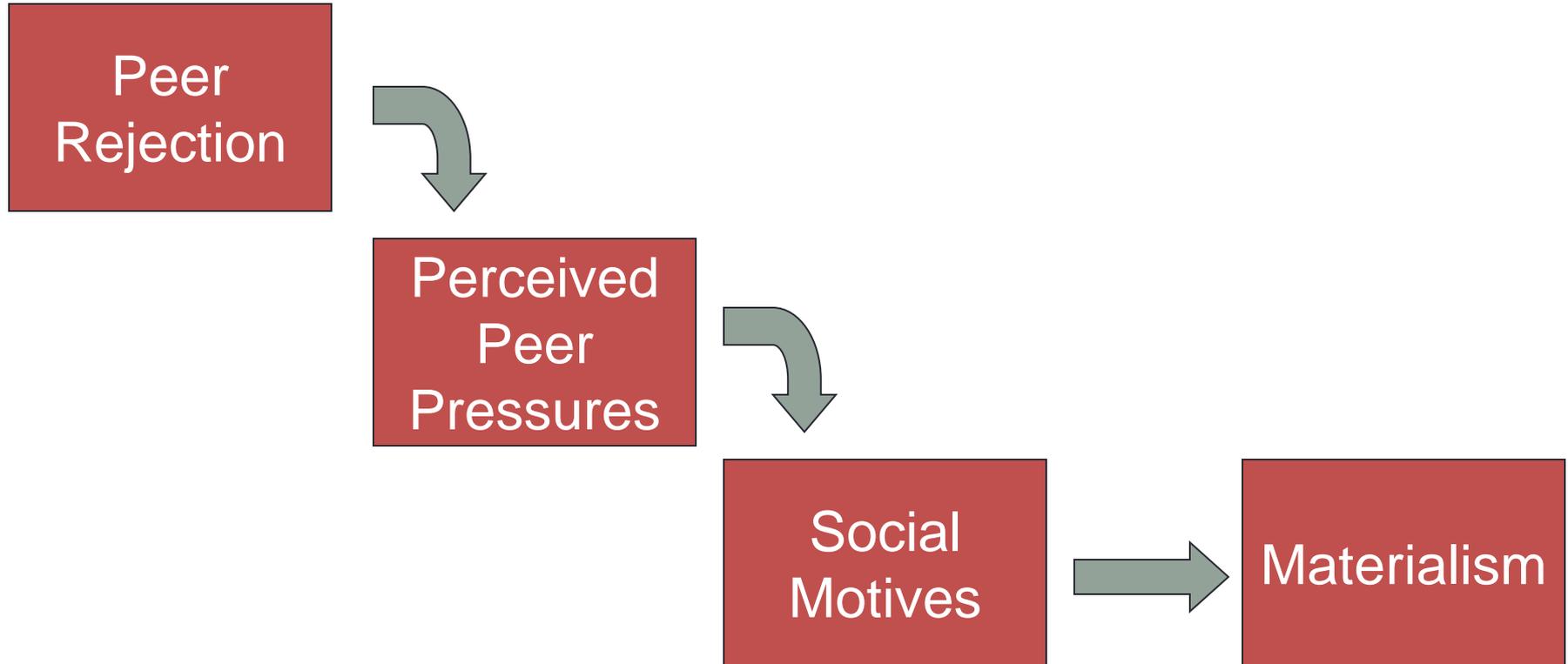
- Group acceptance
  - peers as evaluators
  - importance of social comparison
  - rise in self-presentational concerns

# Enduring patterns of self-presentational concern?

- the self-presentational model of social anxiety (Schlenker & Leary, 1982)
  - strong motivation to make desired impression  
PLUS
  - low expectancy that this will occur
- consequently....
  - anticipation and fear of negative evaluation by others
  - biased attention to negative reactions
  - a negative 'post-mortem' reflecting on self-presentational failures

# Stuff! Materialism and Social Interaction

- perceived peer group pressures in 8- to 11-year-olds
  - antisocial, rebellious, and materialistic attributes



(Banerjee & Dittmar, 2008)

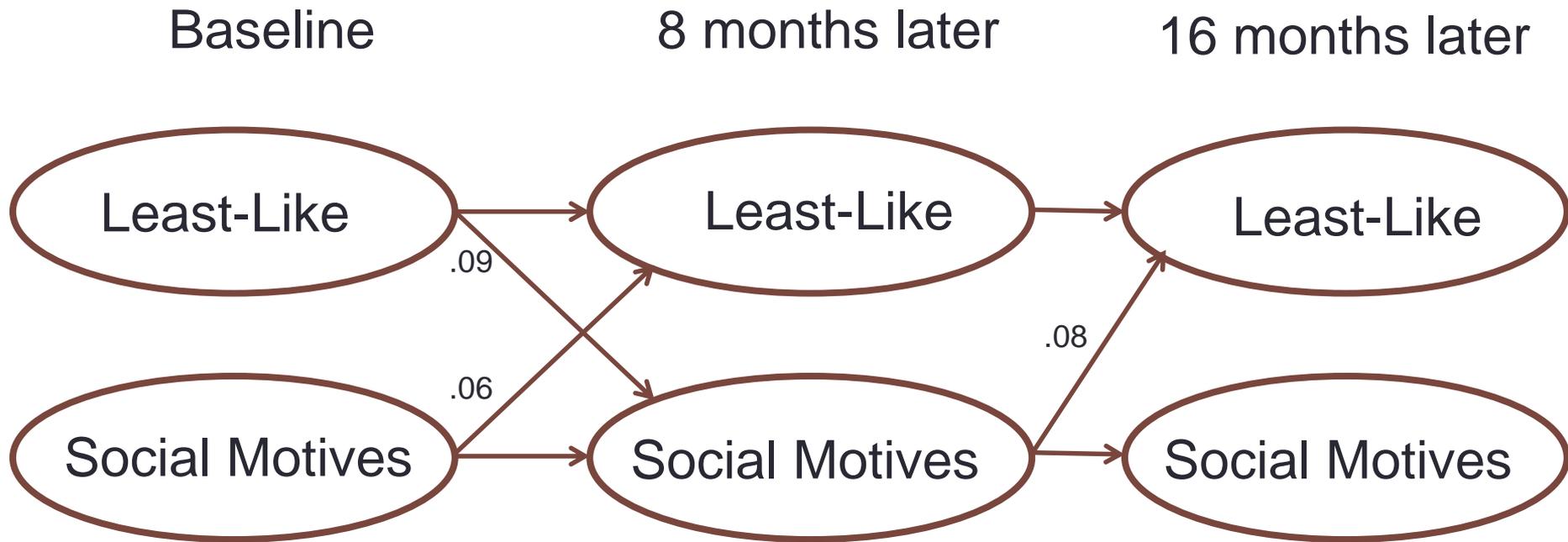
# Appearance concerns in the peer context

- exposure to Barbie dolls linked with lower levels of body esteem and more desire to look thinner – in 5- to 7-year-olds!!
- the peer context is likely to be crucial, especially from middle childhood into adolescence (see Jones et al., 2004)
  - conversations about appearance
  - peer criticisms of appearance
- Some adolescent friendship cliques show a ‘high weight/shape-preoccupied subculture’ (Paxton et al., 1999)
- Some evidence of ‘social physique anxiety’ being linked to peer victimisation (Storch et al., 2007)

# Relevant measures from longitudinal survey

- Sociometric survey
  - Most like
  - Least like
  - Cooperative
  - Disruptive
  - **Most stuff**
  - **Looks good**
  - Popular
- Social motives for consumer culture
- Consumer culture values

# Peer rejection and social motives for consumer culture



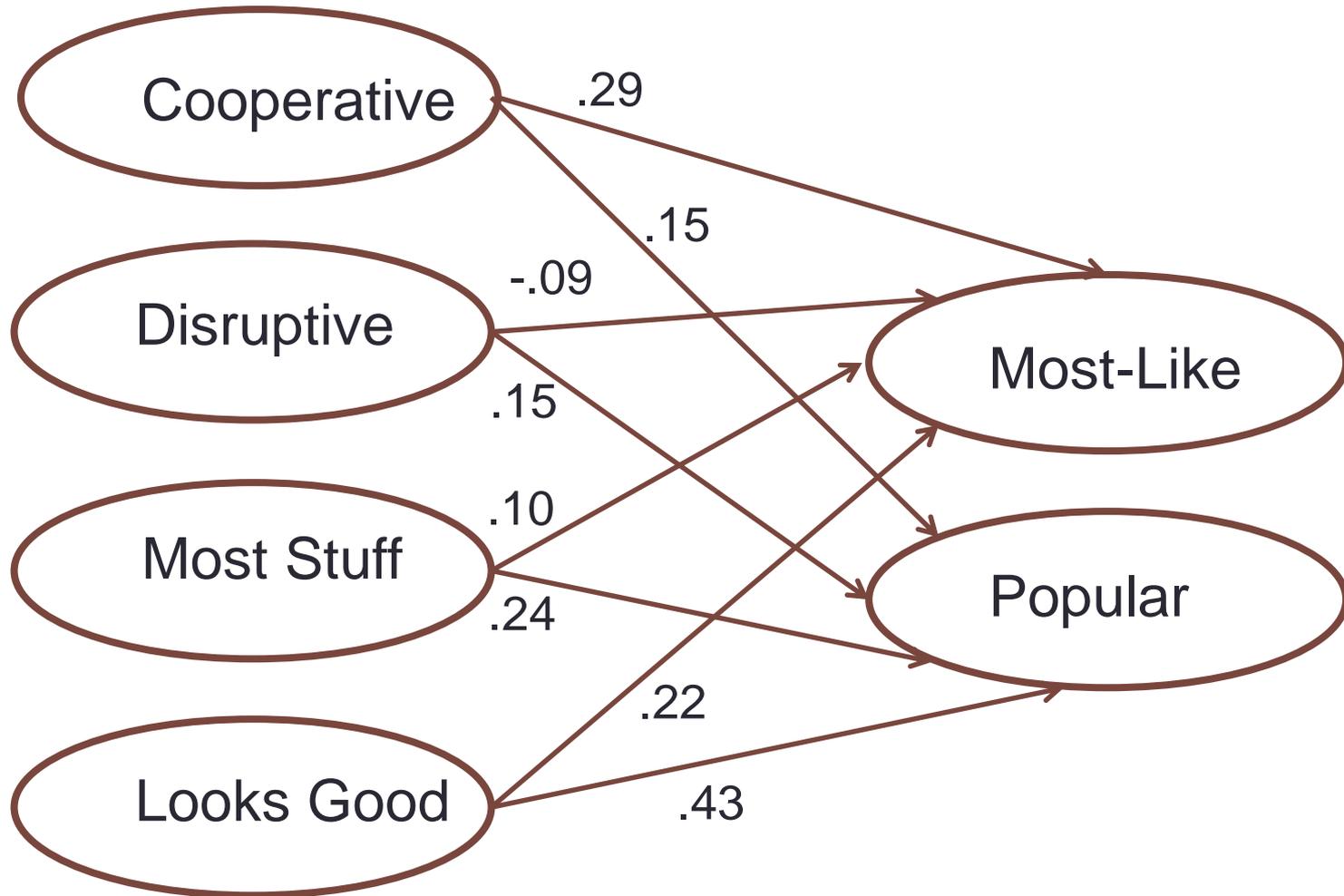
# Distinction between actual liking and perceived popularity

- who you most like to spend free time with
- vs.
- who is really popular

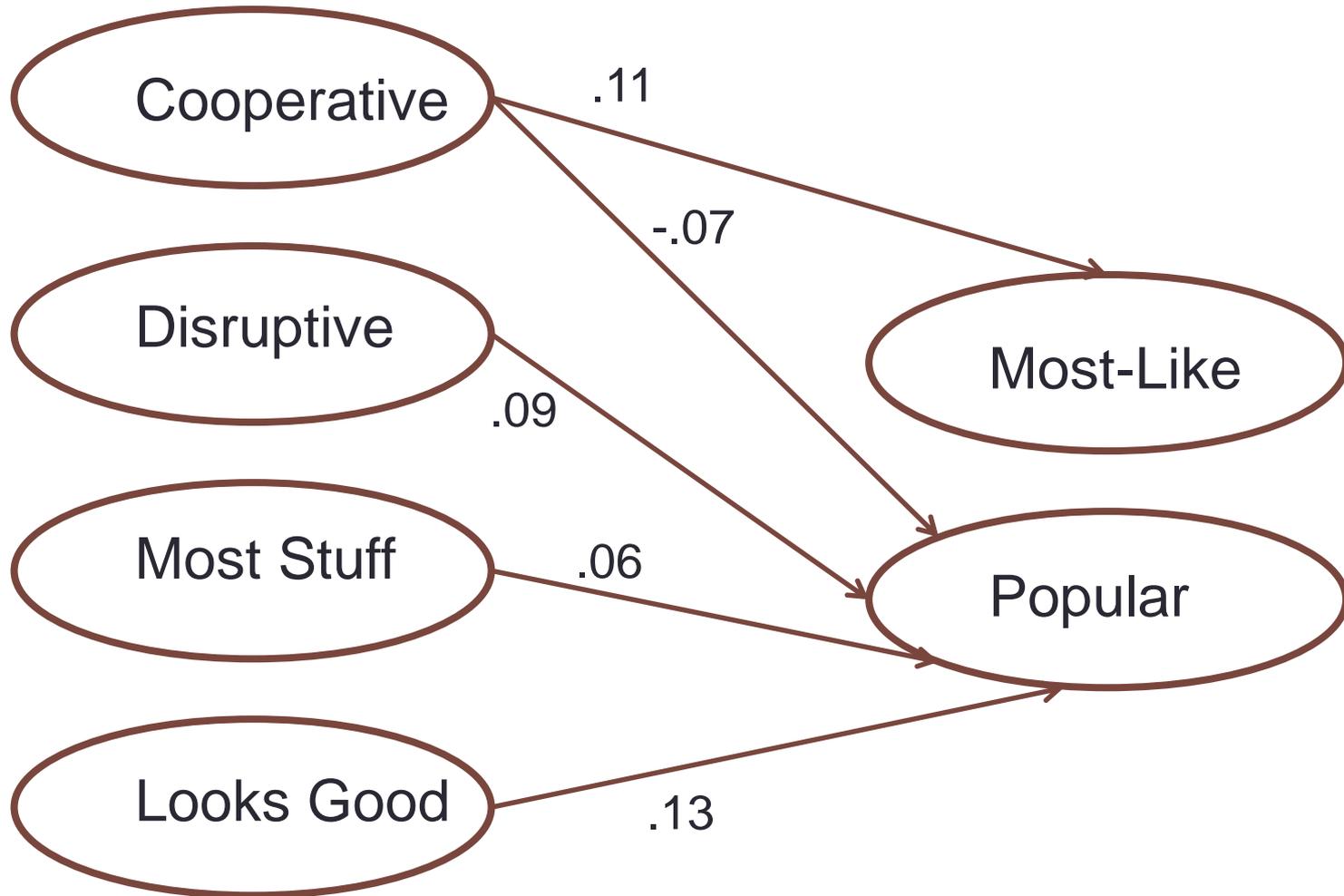
Links with:

- who is cooperative
- who is disruptive
- who has the most stuff
- who looks good

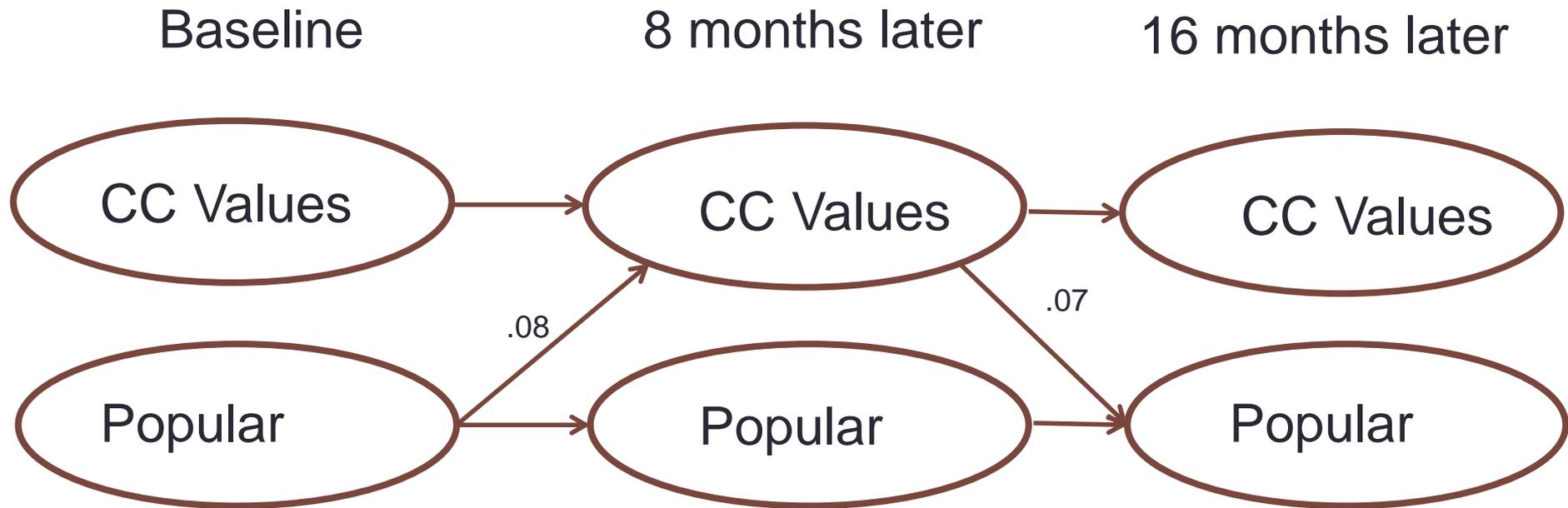
# Whole sample, baseline



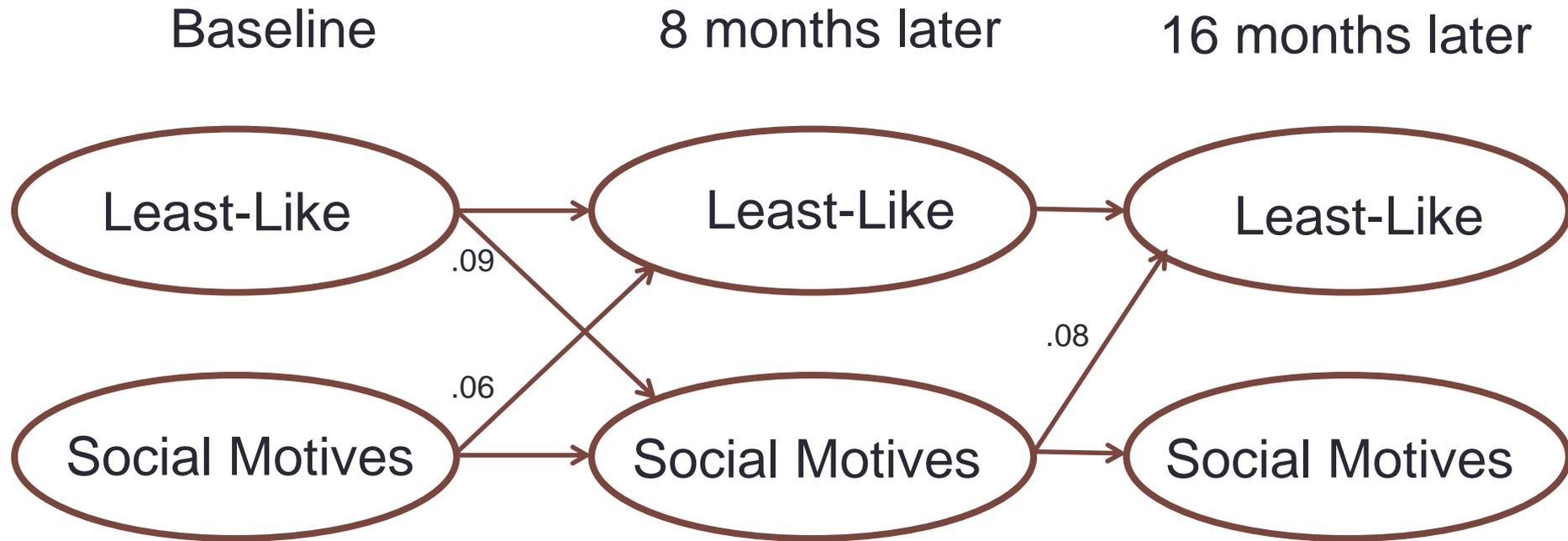
# Whole sample, baseline to 8 months later



# Consumer culture values and perceived popularity



# Back to the peer-rejected children



# Directions for further work

- Specific peer processes
  - patterns of group affiliation
  - friendship interactions
  - social comparison and self-presentation
- Role of media exposure in peer interactions
- Peer selection vs. influence
- Interplay between family and peer socialisation
- Awareness-raising interventions?
  - Media literacy
  - Social and emotional learning