

Introduction to Social Psychology

I. Social Psychology

A. The scientific discipline that attempts to understand and explain how the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others.

B. Emphases

- 1) Power of the situation: depends on the situation
 - a) Armor truck vs nice old lady
- 2) Power of the person: different people do different things
- 3) Importance of cognition/interpretation: rationale for actions
 - a) Whether or not the money is insured
- 4) Application of social psychology principles

II. Social psychology vs. Sociology

A. Social Psych.

- 1) Individual
- 2) Immediate stimuli, psychological states, personality traits
- 3) Requires experimentation

B. Sociology

- 1) Group
- 2) Societal variables
- 3) Surveys, observation, and correlations

III. The Early Years (1895-1934)

A. Norman Triplett- 1895

- 1) Noticed how a person's performance changed when other people were present
- 2) Observed bicycle racers: they went faster when there were spectators compared to no spectators
- 3) **Social Facilitation:** tendency for people to be aroused into better performance on simple tasks (or tasks at which they are expert or that have become autonomous) when under the eye of others, rather than while they are alone

B. MacDougall and Ross- 1908

- 1) Write first textbooks like social psych.
- 2) MacDougall looked at the behavior of the individual in groups
- 3) Ross looked at the behavior of groups

4) MacDougall: psychology oriented; Ross: sociology oriented

C. Floyd Allport- 1934

1) Makes social psych a discipline and applies experimentation, and wrote a social psych textbook

IV. Coming of Age (1935-1945)

A. WWI was happening, and a lot of social psychologist fled to U.S. from Europe

B. U.S. needed them to figure out war time programs like how to enlist people, keep up morale, and citizens to conserve for war efforts, etc.

C. Kurt Lewin: a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany.

1) Employed by government to conduct experiments on morale and conservation

2) Introduced the idea of interactionism: Person and situation influence social behaviors

V. Other Cool things about Kurt Lewin

A. Mentor of Bluma Zeigarnik:

1) **Zeigarnik Effect:** remember things when there is attention on it, once the attention was relieved then you forget it

2) He noticed that waiters remembered their total up until after they paid, then the waiters no longer remembered the total, so his student researched it and coined the concept as the Zeigarnik effect.

B. The icky meat campaign and other wartime programs

1) Itchy meat campaign- convince Americans to eat less desirable portions of animals to conserve meat portions

a) Two ways: tell them why they should eat it or use self-persuasion (what would it take to get you to eat this? Why?)

b) Self-persuasion worked better

VI. Social Psych Growth Spurt/Rapid Expansion (1946-1969)

A. Why? People were curious on why people did what they did during the war and in the news

B. Wanted to know why a civilized society could fall under the authority of Hitler

C. Experiments on brainwashing, persuasion, pro-social behavior, and by-stander effect etc.

VII. Crisis of Confidence (1970-80's)

A. Learned all this stuff about psychology, social behaviors, and human nature

B. But people weren't changing how they were acting

C. Some people in government thought this research was a waste of money, so the government funding decreased

- D. Everything died down in 70's
- E. Went back up in 80's because of social issues like sexual violence, aids, persuasion, aggression etc.

VIII. The Self

- A. People are profoundly influenced by their self-concepts.
- B. It molds and defines their social reality.

IX. Culture

- A. The total lifestyle of a people, including all of the symbols, ideas, preferences and material objects they share.
- B. **Ideology:** a set of beliefs and values held by the members of a social group, which explains the culture both to itself and the other group
- C. Individualism vs. Collectivism
 - 1) Do cultures stress individuality or emphasize group needs over individual needs?
 - a) **Individualism:** western culture, identity in yourself
 - b) **Collectivism:** eastern culture, identity in the group

X. The Hot vs. Cold Approach

- A. Do you think with your heart (emotional) or your head (rational)?

XI. Who actually does this social psychology stuff and what are you going to do with that?

- A. *Most social psychologists are Ph.D.s*
- B. *75% are employed by colleges and universities*
- C. *teaching, researching, marketing, advertising, lawyers*

XII. Self-Fulfilling prophecy

- A. A process by which someone's expectations about a person or group lead to fulfillment of those expectations
- B. **Confirmation Bias:** confirm things that fit our biases and ignore things that disprove our biases

XIII. Ethics

- A. Can we do this?
- B. Milgram's study: is making someone think they shocked someone to death ethical?
- C. Deception: Blind Participants
- D. Institutional review boards
- E. Informed consent
- F. Debriefing